

“HISTORY’S BLINKERS”:
RESITUATING 1950s ABORIGINAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC
HISTORY WITHIN ANOMIE THEORY

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By
ANA NOVAKOVIC

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ABSTRACT

Colonial discourse has typically defined and limited understandings of Aboriginal history. By analyzing the educational, housing and employment issues found in the fieldnotes for Harry Hawthorn's 1958 report, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*, this work attempts to sidestep some of the binaries inherent in colonial discourse and uncover perspectives that have commonly been overlooked. It does this by adopting Émile Durkheim's analytical lens of anomie. But whereas standard anthropological and sociological models of anomie used to understand social dysfunction within Aboriginal communities have been limited by a superficial understanding of the factors that lead to social disintegration, this study uses an alternate definition of anomie (informed by Robert Merton's conception of goals and means) to challenge common historical understandings of Aboriginal people's relations to education, housing, and steady employment.

Contrary to lingering stereotypes and common portrayals in historical scholarship, the analytical lens of anomie allows us to appreciate that Aboriginal people placed a great deal of importance on education, desired and invested considerable resources to improve their housing conditions, and wished for steady employment and the security and predictability it offered. The fact that these goals were often not realized is attributed in part to the limited means Aboriginal people had available to them.

The more critical factor in limiting the achievement of goals, however, may have been the government's role, as explained by Durkheim in *The Division of Labor In Society*.

Durkheim argued that solidarity could be compromised if certain criteria were not met. Such a scenario would most likely be brought about by inappropriate state regulation, which Durkheim characterized as the over-extension of regulation, constraint, and inconsistency. Each of these factors was clearly visible on Aboriginal reserves in the 1950s in the policies and behaviours of the Department of Indian Affairs and its Indian Agents. In the end, Durkheim's understanding of state regulation enables us to challenge the notion that Aboriginal people were unable to transition from traditional to modern life, and allows us to appreciate the fuller significance of the state's failure to enable effective governance for Aboriginal people.

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CHAPTER I

From Colonialism to Anomie: A Critique of Common Discourses in Aboriginal History

In that brief moment, Velutha looked up and saw things that he hadn't seen before. Things that had been out of bounds so far, obscured by history's blinkers.

Simple things.

For instance, he saw that Rahel's mother was a woman.

That she had deep dimples when she smiled and that they stayed on long after her smile left her eyes. He saw that her brown arms were round and firm and perfect. That her shoulders shone, but her eyes were somewhere else. He saw that when he gave her gifts they no longer needed to be offered flat on the palms of his hands so that she wouldn't have to touch him. His boats and boxes. His little windmills. He saw too that he was not necessarily the only giver of gifts. That *she* had gifts to give him, too.

This knowing slid into him cleanly, like the sharp edge of a knife. Cold and hot at once. It only took a moment.

Ammu saw that he saw. She looked away. He did too. History's fiends returned to claim them. To re-wrap them in its old, scarred pelt and drag them back to where they really lived. When the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much.¹

Aboriginal history has often been told within the context of a colonial discourse that comes attached with a set of established dichotomies and meta-narratives. Much as “history's fiends” claim Velutha and Ammu, this discourse drags Aboriginal people “back to where they really [live],” into a set of dichotomies that perpetually cast Aboriginal lives in contrast to those of their Euro-Canadian colonizers. Paige Raibmon examined the roots of this positioning in *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast*. She argued that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries “colonial society fashioned a powerful ‘either-or’ notion of Indian authenticity that relied on a wide variety of associated binaries.” To be authentic was to be Indian, colonized, subsistent, collective, static, subordinate, etc. To embody any of the contrasting traits – capitalist, individual, dynamic, dominant – implied a metamorphosis into an amorphous figure, no longer Indian and incapable of becoming White, destined for extinction.²

¹Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New York: Random House, 1997), 168.

²Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 7 (diagram caption).

Recognizing the harmful nature of such labels, scholars have suggested alternate ways of defining the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and have met with varying degrees of success. Writing about Indian self-government in 1993, Menno Boldt addressed the use of race as the defining characteristic of Indians and non-Indians. While recognizing that shifting the focus away from racial definitions could be interpreted as a denial of racism in Canada and that a “racial designation can afford a serviceable mantle of protection to a minority group where there are laws against racism,” Boldt insisted that taking cover under such a mantle carried serious threats as well.³ Specifically, Boldt argued that a racial definition robbed Indians of their histories, cultures, languages – the essential aspects of their identity and consequently “undermine[d] their historical and moral claims to self-determination.” Since racism was generally framed as a social problem, Boldt reasoned that it distracted from economic and political subjugation, which was responsible for much of the injustice levied against Indians.⁴

In the preface to the 1996 edition of *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*, Rolf Knight also took issue with methodological trends at work in Aboriginal history. He questioned the “guiding role” that ethnicity is said to play in people’s lives and made it clear that his guiding ideology was based on class rather than race issues.⁵ Paul Tenant meanwhile eschewed historical categorizations altogether, and

³ Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: the Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), xiv.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁵ Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books Ltd., 1996), ix, 19-20.

followed in Knight's footsteps by regarding "Indians not as mere objects of history but as ordinary human beings who adapt, cope, and decide."⁶

These issues are equally present in histories of Aboriginal peoples' economic participation. Most early histories of economic development argued that Aboriginal people's economic importance declined significantly with the end of the fur trade era. Richard J. Ossenberrg, editor of *Power and Change in Canada*, observed, "[t]he ascendancy of a merchant class through the fur trade was associated with the rapid decline in the power of the native peoples...as the fur trade was replaced by the wheat economy, the labour of native peoples became virtually superfluous."⁷ In his work, *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*, James Frideres concurred with Ossenberrg, noting further that "[s]ince their defeat, Native people have been suspended in a state of perpetual dependency."⁸ This stance was supported by an even more pervasive idea, articulated by John Lutz, that Aboriginal people who "enter[ed] the capitalist economy [...] [were] judged to be 'inauthentic,' assimilated, 'just like [W]hite men,' corrupted."⁹ In other words, Aboriginal people *had to* excuse themselves from economic participation in order to remain Aboriginal – at least in Euro-Canadians' eyes.

Knight's above cited *Indians at Work* was the first to take issue with prevailing views about economic activity and Indian identity in B.C. Originally written in 1978, Knight

⁶ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), xi.

⁷ Richard J. Ossenberrg, ed., "Approaches to Power and Change: A Selected Overview and Interpretation," *Power and Change in Canada* (McClelland and Stewart Limited: Toronto, 1980), 19. Ossenberrg was referencing Stanley B. Ryerson's *The Founding of Canada: Beginnings to 1815* and *Unequal Union: Roots of Conflict in the Canadas*.

⁸ James S. Frideres, *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1983), 293.

⁹ John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 305.

intended his work to “sketch in some of the forgotten components of working-class history in British Columbia.”¹⁰ Beginning with the fur trade, Knight explored Aboriginal people’s participation in ethnographic trade, cottage industries, farming, fishing and cannery work, sawmilling, logging and longshoring, mining, railways and transportation. The result was a direct challenge to the idea that Aboriginal people were peripheral in the post fur trade economy. More recently, John Lutz has taken an even more comprehensive look at Aboriginal people’s participation in economic activities, criticizing historians’ treatment of Aboriginal wage work. Lutz noted that historians have generally taken the lack of evidence in archival records “at face value and have unwittingly turned these omissions, and along with them the ‘lazy Indian’ stereotype, into historical fact.”¹¹ In contrast to the established dichotomies, Lutz argued that Aboriginal people did not choose between being Aboriginal or participating in wage work and instead, “made choices after considering the full range of subsistence resources, wage work, and state payments available to them” with the resulting creation of the “moditional” economy.¹²

Significant strides have clearly been made to emancipate Aboriginal peoples from damaging discourses but many untold stories remain, particularly within Aboriginal socio-economic history. It is, therefore, worthwhile to explore other methods of understanding Aboriginal history that can help further dislodge the remnants of colonial discourse and the misrepresentations to which it has led. Anomie is one such alternative that has often been applied in the study of social ills, among Aboriginal peoples and other groups, but in a limited manner that has established an equally restrictive discourse. Formally defined as

¹⁰ Knight, *Indians at Work*, ix.

¹¹ Lutz, *Makúk*, 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, 46.

“the absence of laws or norms,”¹³ anomie has been utilized by philosophers, theologians, sociologists, psychologists and criminologists in a variety of contexts but has received too little attention from historians.¹⁴ From its origin and through the centuries, anomie has generally been equated with a lack of norms in society and has therefore commonly held negative connotations. It has been used to study various forms of social disintegration and has offered valuable insights in this field, though not without criticism. The questions that scholars of anomie ask of social systems, however, are insightful and should not be restricted to examining only dysfunctional aspects of society. Asking these questions within Aboriginal communities, without assuming or focusing on dysfunction, can broaden anomie theory and correct certain persistent stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples. This will be demonstrated in this thesis when I apply the questions of goals, means and regulation, mostly famously addressed by Robert Merton and Émile Durkheim, to socio-economic condition on Aboriginal reserves in the 1950s, as depicted in the Hawthorn report, a government commissioned anthropological study that examined the then current economic conditions of Native people in British Columbia.

Durkheim and Merton both defined anomie as a form of social dysfunction, though they accounted for its causes differently. Durkheim reasoned that human desires had to be controlled by an external force since they have no natural limits. He designated society as the necessary regulating force since “[i]t alone has the power necessary to stipulate law and to set the point beyond which the passions must not go.”¹⁵ Without this regulation, human desires become disproportionate to individual means. Anomie results when society is

¹³ Or, more commonly, as laws in conflict, lacking a single dominant framework.

¹⁴ Marco Orrù, *Anomie: History and Meanings* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 1-2.

¹⁵ Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, ed. George Simpson (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1951), 249.

incapable of performing this regulating role, either as a chronic condition (as in trade or industry), or during transitional periods or crises that “cause society to lose its effectiveness in guiding man’s behaviour.”¹⁶

Durkheim first postulated these ideas in *The Division of Labor in Society*, published in 1893.¹⁷ He argued that the increase in volume and density of societies transformed the collective conscience from concrete and imperative to abstract and voluntary. Early societies were small in number and density and therefore spread over small geographical areas. This meant that all individuals were influenced by the same environment and could relate to it in very specific ways that were uniform among all the members. As societies grew they expanded their terrain and since individuals’ relation to their environment was no longer consistent for all, the collective conscience became more general and, importantly, in doing so, it also became more rational: understanding through sensations was replaced by

¹⁶ Mathieu Deflem, “From Anomie to Anomia and Anomic Depression: A Sociological Critique on the Use of Anomie in Psychiatric Research,” *Social Science and Medicine* 29, no. 5 (1989): 628.

¹⁷ Though anomie is closely linked with Durkheim and owes much of its development to him, its origins predate Durkheim by centuries. In *Anomie: History and Meanings* Marco Orrù delved into anomie’s past, exposing a multitude of meanings and uses. The term appeared in classical Greek tragedies, Plato’s writings, theological debates and a number of other contexts, often falling out of use in interim periods. It cropped up in “discussions about nature, justice, culture, sin, freedom, evil, necessity, rationality, social order, human nature, morality, means and ends of action, individualism, alienation, and despair.” In the nineteenth century it was a young French philosopher and sociologist named Jean Marie Guyau who brought it out of its most recent spell of obscurity. Guyau outlined his idea of anomie in *The Non-Religion of the Future* and *Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction* but was unable to develop it further due to his untimely death. As a result, he has not received much attention in discussions of anomie but deserves a more prominent position than has been allowed him. Not only is Guyau’s concept of anomie relevant “for both ethical and sociological theory” and a “theoretically and historically sound alternative to Durkheim’s concept” but it is a rare example of a positive articulation of anomie’s place in society. The term came to Durkheim’s attention when he reviewed Guyau’s *The Non-Religion of the Future* and was transformed several years later in *The Division of Labor* where Durkheim critiqued Guyau’s formulation and put forth an alternative. Orrù, *Anomie*, 2-3, 10, 95.

understanding through concepts. And “[b]ecause it [became] more rational, the collective conscience [became] less imperative, and for this very reason, it wield[ed] less restraint over the free development of individual varieties.”¹⁸

Another condition contributing to the decline of the collective conscience was the loss of tradition since “[w]hat [gave] force to collective states [was] not only that they [were] common to the present generation, but especially that they [were], for the most part, a legacy of previous generations.” As young people migrated to cities their ties with the elderly – the embodiments of tradition – were severed and opportunities for innovation opened.¹⁹ Therefore, in instances of mechanical solidarity individuals were linked by their similarities while in organic solidarity they are complimentary and linked by their dependence on one another. During the transition process, the common consciousness found in mechanical societies was eroded and replaced by dependence in organic societies. Common values are still needed but must come from another source.

In essence, Durkheim was concerned with the cohesion and solidarity of societies, which the division of labour was thought to threaten, and how these social bonds could be protected without encroaching on individual autonomy. This is not to say, however, that the division of labour inevitably leads to an anomic condition. When the necessary conditions are met, the division of labour produces solidarity in organic societies; it is only when these conditions are not fulfilled that it “presents pathological or anomic forms.”²⁰ These conditions and their implications for Aboriginal communities will be discussed in Chapter III.

¹⁸ Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor In Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1964, c1933), 290-291.

¹⁹ Ibid., 291-294.

²⁰ Deflem, “From Anomie to Anomia,” 627.

Although Durkheim's ideas eventually became very influential among sociologists, his musings on anomie did not receive significant attention until the 1940s and 1950s when Merton popularized the concept among American sociologists following the publication of his article, "Social Structure and Anomie," in 1938.²¹ Along with bringing widespread attention to anomie, Merton fundamentally altered the concept. The movement away from Durkheim's formulation was immediately apparent when Merton questioned the "tendency in sociological theory to attribute the malfunctioning of social structure primarily to those of man's imperious biological drives which are not adequately restrained by social control." Merton argued that this stance "provide[d] no basis for determining the nonbiological conditions which induce deviations from prescribed patterns of conduct" and attempted to correct this misconception by showing how "certain phases of social structure generate[d] the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitute[d] a 'normal' response."²²

Two socio-cultural structures were central to Merton's investigation. The first was the "frame of aspirational reference," which "consist[ed] of culturally defined goals, purposes, and interests." The second was the "moral or institutional regulation of permissible and required procedures for attaining" the culturally prescribed goals.²³ Although these elements "operate[d] jointly" they did not necessarily "bear some constant relation to one another." The emphasis on goals could outweigh the emphasis on institutional means with the resulting discrepancy giving rise to deviant behaviour while the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *American Sociological Review* 3, no. 5 (Oct., 1938): 672.

²³ Importantly, in relation to Durkheim, Merton made it clear that "[s]ome of these cultural aspirations are related to the original drives of man, but they are not determined by them." Ibid., 672-673.

reverse scenario would create a “tradition-bound, sacred society characterized by neophobia.”²⁴ Merton focused on the first scenario, in which regulations were “so vitiated by the goal-emphasis that the range of behavior [was] limited only by considerations of technical expediency.” This eventually resulted in social disintegration and anomie.²⁵

However, over-emphasis on goals was not the only type of “*culture patterning*” possible nor was anomie the only “[mode] of adjustment or adaptation *by individuals*” in response to ends/means discrepancies. Equilibrium between goals and means and over-emphasis on means were the other “ideal types of social orders” identified by Merton with five possible responses: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. The first resulted from equilibrium between goals and means, innovation from an over-emphasis on goals over means, ritualism from the reverse scenario, retreatism from rejection of both goals and means and rebellion took place when both culturally prescribed goals and means were rejected and replaced by new goals and means.²⁶

²⁴ The imbalance between goals and means resulting in these social extremes could be avoided as long as individuals found “satisfactions from the achievement of the goals and satisfactions emerging directly from the institutionally canalized modes of striving to attain these ends.” Ibid., 673-674.

²⁵ Ibid., 674. However, Merton emphasizes that “[a] high frequency of deviate behavior is not generated simply by ‘lack of opportunity.’” Rather, “[i]t is only when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain *common* symbols of success *for the population at large* while its social structure rigorously restricts or completely eliminates access to approved modes of acquiring these symbols *for a considerable part of the same population*, that antisocial behavior ensues on a considerable scale,” 680.

²⁶ Ibid., 676. The modes of adaptation in response to an imbalance between socially prescribed goals and institutional means were “differentially distributed over the different social strata of society, depending on the accessibility of legitimate means and the degree of assimilation of goals and norms in each stratum.” Deflem, “From Anomie to Anomia,” 628. Merton explained the modes of adaptation and their relation to social strata in some detail: conformity implies an acceptance of both goals and means and is the most common social response, even when an imbalance between goals and means exists. Innovation entails an acceptance of socially prescribed goals but an abandonment of sanctioned means. This takes place when the social emphasis on goals greatly outweighs the emphasis on use of legitimate means. It is most common among the lower strata of society because legitimate

Whether one sides with Durkheim or Merton in accounting for social dysfunction, it should come as no surprise that anomie struck a chord with sociologists and anthropologists studying Aboriginal communities. It was a very tempting explanation for the social ills evident among Aboriginal peoples, who could be thought of as victims of the forced movement from mechanical to organic societies by colonizers or of the social over-emphasis on the success-goal, which they did not have the means to achieve. Indeed, anomie became a common explanatory force in discussions of suicide, alcoholism and related problems on Aboriginal reserves. As a prime example, Henry Zentner argued that Indian reserves were

means to succeed are most limited to this segment of the population so the imbalance between goals and means is more acute. In addition to the stress on goals and limited access to means, Merton stressed a third factor required for innovation: society must place “*a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent for all its members.*” In societies with entrenched social classes success goals vary for different social strata and lower segments of society are not expected to achieve certain goals, thus limiting the pressures leading to deviant behaviour. Such is the case for “imperfectly socialized” individuals. But for “those who have fully internalized the institutional values” the typical response to a goals-means imbalance is ritualism, a situation where goals are abandoned but means are strictly adhered to. When individuals who have been imbued with the obligation to follow rules find themselves repeatedly frustrated in achieving their goals, they are likely to abandon these goals in favour of an unflinching adherence to procedures. Abandonment of established rules is a guilt-ridden alternative so compliance with procedures becomes an end in itself. Although this is not an overt demonstration of deviant behaviour in the sense that innovation is, it still does not conform to the cultural ideal. Ritualism is most often found among the lower-middle class where “parents typically exert continuous pressure upon children to abide by the moral mandates of the society” and where there is less likelihood of reaching success goals than among the upper-middle class. Retreatism is an abandonment of both goals and means. This is the least common adaptation and people who respond in this manner are “*in the society but not of it.*” It happens when the individual fully absorbs both the socially prescribed goals and institutional means but “accessible institutional avenues are not productive of success.” Abandonment of goals is not possible but neither is use of illegitimate means. Unable to resolve the conflict, the individual “drops out” altogether and becomes “asocialized.” Rebellion is the substitution of culturally prescribed goals and means with a new social order. This takes place when individuals come to see the established order as arbitrary, since “the arbitrary is precisely that which can neither exact allegiance nor possess legitimacy, for it might as well be otherwise.” Within the American context studied by Merton, this would mean that “cultural standards of success would be sharply modified and provision would be made for a closer correspondence between merit, effort and reward.” Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), 141-157.

sites that fostered a general break down in the social bonds linking individuals with society resulting in a fragmentation of social identity and a disregard for social values. The reasoning behind Zentner's assessment was evident in his study, "Reservation Social Structure and Anomie," where his diagnosis of an anonymous Aboriginal community as exhibiting "an advanced state of anomie" was based on the community's "characteristically high rates of child neglect, alcoholism, minor crime, truancy, illegitimacy, divorce, marital and occupational maladjustments, accidents, and other forms of dependency when compared with ecologically similar Non-Indian communities adjacent to it."²⁷

A similar perspective can be found in the Canadian west coast context, where the study of anomie and Aboriginal society is most closely associated with Wolfgang Jilek. Jilek approached anomie among Salish Aboriginal people from a psychological rather than sociological perspective and focused on traditional healing methods. Yet, suicide and alcoholism, as indicators of social disintegration, still formed the mainspring of his study. In *Indian Healing: Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today* Jilek explored the use of the winter dance ceremonial as therapy for anomic depression. He defined anomic depression as "a chronic dysphoric state characterized by feelings of existential frustration, discouragement, defeat, lowered self-esteem and sometimes moral disorientation."²⁸ Spirit illness was historically "a strictly seasonal, stereotyped pathomorphic goal-directed state inevitably leading to spirit singing and dancing" but had become the "label for the depressive syndrome associated with experiences of relative deprivation and identity confusion which we have called anomic depression." The change in meaning was

²⁷ Henry Zentner, "Reservation Social Structure and Anomie; A Case Study," in *Perspectives on the North American Indians*, ed. Mark Nagler (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972), 215.

²⁸ Wolfgang G. Jilek, *Indian Healing: Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today* (Surrey, B.C.: Hancock House Publishers Ltd., 1982), 52.

concurrent with a change in purpose since initiations were no longer meant “only to provide entrance into a ceremonial, *via* the cure of a ritualized pathomorphic state, through rebirth as a new human being, but to overcome sickness and faulty behaviour contracted by exposure to an alien culture, through rebirth as a true Indian.” Jilek concluded that “what in the past was a ritual with psychohygienic aspects is now an organized Indian effort at culture-congenial psychotherapy.”²⁹

Jilek was depending, at least in part, on Merton’s idea of “dissociation between culturally defined aspirations and socially structured means,”³⁰ which generated “both social and psychic pathology.”³¹ According to Jilek and other sociologists, the “deleterious psychosocial consequences of *anomie*” resulted from historical processes, and in particular, colonial society’s attempts to lure “Indian people away from their cultural identity by the offer of economic baits and under the pretext of a phony egalitarianism.” The winter spirit dance ceremonial worked to counter these historical changes by restoring the feeling of Indian identity and group cohesiveness, which was not only important for the group “but also for the individual, as it forestall[ed] the ultimately self-destructive process of *anomic depression*.”³² The “Indian power” acquired through drug and alcohol abstinence and adherence “to traditional rules of conduct” had a “positive spiritual force which the emerging pan-Indian opposition mythology [closely associated with the pow wow movement] compare[d] to the negative materialism of White society” and this in turn had

²⁹ Ibid., 103-105.

³⁰ Merton, “Social Structure and Anomie,” 674, as quoted in Jilek, *Indian Healing*, 50.

³¹ Jilek, *Indian Healing*, 50.

³² Ibid., 107.

“identity and ego-strengthening therapeutic effects on many culturally drifting young native persons who [were] at risk of *anomic depression* and alcohol abuse.”³³

Writing years later, D.J. Spencer questioned the connection between suicide and psychiatric illness and referenced Durkheim’s *Suicide* as the source of an alternate explanation for the prevalence of suicides in the modern world. Speaking specifically of Australian aboriginals, Spencer explained that suicide “victims sense that their norms and values are no longer relevant, and their ties to society are thus weakened and lost.”³⁴ Spencer delved further into causes behind the social ills evident in Australian aboriginal communities a few years later in “Anomie and Demoralization in Transitional Cultures.”³⁵ He summarized the “basic thesis” that had become common in studies of dysfunction among aboriginal peoples, namely “that the change from a long-established pattern of life to that of a more powerful dominant culture create[d] personal conflict and social stresses, from which relief [was] unsatisfactorily sought by a variety of strategies such as substance

³³ Ibid., 158-159.

³⁴ D.J. Spencer, “Suicide and Anomie,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 90 (February 1997): 87. Spencer was referencing J.R. Clayer, “Suicide by aboriginal people in South Australia – comparison with suicide deaths in the total urban and rural population,” *Medical Journal of Australia* 154 (1991): 683-685.

³⁵ Although Spencer was speaking about Australian aboriginals, his comments apply equally in the North American context since the high rates of “[a]lcoholism, diabetes, renal failure, obesity, smoking and substance abuse [...] have been reported in many other parts of the world where indigenous people are faced with the difficulties associated with transition from a historically earlier form of culture to that of contemporary Western society, following European invasion during the last two centuries,” D.J. Spencer, “Anomie and Demoralization in Transitional Cultures: The Australian Aboriginal Model,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 37, no. 1 (March 2000): 5. Spencer was referencing J.P. Hunt, “Alcoholism amongst Aboriginal people,” *The Medical Journal of Australia, Special Supplement* 1 (1991): 13.

use and antisocial behaviours.”³⁶ So whether seen through a social or psychological lens, dysfunction in Aboriginal communities was accounted for in great part by anomie.

However, this persistence of anomie as an analytic framework for understanding and interpreting the historical processes leading to societal breakdown in Aboriginal communities made some scholars question the assumed connections between social ills such as suicide, homicide, alcoholism or social disintegration and anomie. Thomas J. Young’s report on findings from a study of poverty, suicide and homicide statistics in twelve Indian Health Service areas from 1979-1981 at first glance appeared to support the existing literature. Yet, the findings chronicled briefly in “Suicide and Homicide Among Native Americans: Anomie or Social Learning” cast doubt on previous links between poverty, suicide and homicide and consequently the presence of anomie as well. The study reported by Young was intended to test the hypothesis “that poverty would be related to suicide and homicide rates for both men and women” but found instead that “[p]overty was moderately related to suicide and homicide among men [...] while nonsignificant [...] rank-order correlations were found among women.” The lack of correlation between high poverty rates on one hand, and low suicide and homicide rates, on the other, among Navajo men, and a similar discrepancy among Aboriginal women in general, “provide[d] some additional support to social learning explanations” and raised questions about the causal relationships between anomie and certain expressions or projections of colonial power and social disintegration.³⁷

³⁶ In addition to anomie, Spencer also cited bereavement – grief over a lost culture and way of life experienced on the social rather than individual level – and an imbalance in funding for social services. Spencer, “Anomie and Demoralization,” 8-10.

³⁷ Thomas J. Young, “Suicide and Homicide Among Native Americans: Anomie or Social Learning?” *Psychological Reports* 68 (1991): 1137-1138. Young did not elaborate on what social learning explanations might entail.

Even before Young proposed social learning as an alternative explanation to anomie, Jerrold E. Levy and Stephen J. Kunitz challenged previous findings and assumptions about anomie in Aboriginal communities with an investigation of specific forms of deviance – homicide, suicide and cirrhosis – among the Navajo and Hopi. One would expect to see a strong correlation between social pathologies and acculturation in Aboriginal communities given the upheaval wrought by a move to reservation life but rather than seeing a rise in cases of homicide, suicide and cirrhosis from the late nineteenth-century to the mid-twentieth century Levy and Kunitz observed steady rates, generally equal to national levels, throughout the period. Moreover, they noted that differences between social pathologies among the Navajo and Hopi and those among Whites or African-Americans were in form rather than rate and could be traced to traditional and cultural sources rather than acculturation.

Discrepancies between previous studies and their own findings formed the basis for Levy and Kunitz's critique of the teleological nature of applications of anomie in Aboriginal settings. They identified the cyclical pattern in their article, "Indian Reservations, Anomie, and Social Pathologies," explaining that social disintegration was believed to result in personal disintegration and pathology and if pathology was observed, it was assumed the society was disintegrating.³⁸ Levy and Kunitz further explained that the historical basis for this reasoning was Émile Durkheim's conception of deviance as a historical phenomenon. The progression established by Durkheim and commonly referenced by sociologists and anthropologists was explained as follows:

³⁸ Jerrold E. Levy and Stephen J. Kunitz, "Indian Reservations, Anomie, and Social Pathologies," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (Summer, 1971): 100.

primitive societies were highly integrated, stable, homogeneous, and possessed of coherent moral orders which enabled the individual to withstand physical privation. Modern industrial societies are heterogeneous, less well integrated, less stable, and possessing confused and conflicting moral codes they tend to be more anomic and to exhibit more personal disintegration in the form of social and mental pathologies. Primitive societies conquered by modern industrial societies are in acute states of social disintegration because of very rapid change, radically different moral orders competing for allegiance of the population, and virtually no satisfactory means to achieve either the traditional or the new goals. In consequence, levels of personal disintegration ought to be high.³⁹

In addition to criticisms aimed at Durkheim's concept of anomie, there were also criticisms of the application of Durkheim's and Merton's ideas. Jilek's use of anomie, or what he called anomic depression, came under fire by Mathieu Deflem, who took issue with Jilek's claim that he was basing his account on Durkheim's concept of anomie. In fact, Deflem claimed, Jilek neglected Durkheim's conceptions of anomie, as defined in *Division of Labor* and *Suicide*, including Durkheim's distinction between acute and chronic anomie. Although Jilek described "the basic socio-cultural characteristics of Coast Salish Indian society which [...] can be circumscribed as being in a state of anomie," this was not in keeping with Durkheim's definition of the term. Deflem explained that Durkheim did not use anomie to refer only to "society's lack or ineffectiveness of norms" but specifically to "denote the lack of [sic] ineffectiveness of society's norms *limiting man's passions and needs*."⁴⁰ Jilek, however, considered Coast Salish Indian society anomic "because of the changed, Westernized and non-Aboriginal origin and nature on the Indians imposed values." Deflem accused Jilek of "too loosely adopt[ing] Durkheim's concept of anomie to refer to processes of acculturation, Westernization and cultural change."⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁰ Deflem, "From Anomie to Anomia," 630. Deflem's criticism is, in fact, aimed at both Jilek and Leo Srole, who first introduced the concept of anomia in his studies of social psychiatry in the 1950s. However, only the criticism aimed at Jilek will be discussed here.

⁴¹ Ibid., 631.

Deflem further showed that Jilek's application of Merton's theories was equally flawed. Deflem explained that Merton's "concept of anomie [did] *not* refer to the value-conflict of a dissociation between culturally defined goals and institutional norms" but to "a de-institutionalization of means, which [was] the *consequence* of the dissociation between cultural goals and institutional norms." In other words, an imbalance between socially prescribed goals and institutional means can certainly lead to anomie by causing the de-institutionalization of means but it does not necessarily result in this state. Jilek, however, neglected this distinction, equating "the value-conflict of goals and norms with anomie."⁴²

Finally, Jilek's simultaneous application of Durkheim's and Merton's theories within a single context was in itself problematic. Deflem explained that "Durkheim and Merton applied their concepts of anomie to explain different social phenomena, respectively suicide and deviant behaviour, and, second, more importantly, their definitions of anomie [did] not refer to the same condition of society." Durkheim's concept referred to the de-regulation of goals while Merton's referred to a de-institutionalization of means so "if the two approaches are to be combined [...] a theoretical framework has to be developed to outline the way in which society's regulation of goals and its integration by institutionalized means are inter-related."⁴³

An additional issue emerges when one considers that Durkheim's and Merton's concepts of anomie referred to social states whereas Jilek's anomic depression referred to "a psycho-physiologic and behavioural syndrome of individuals" and was therefore an

⁴² This oversight on Jilek's part may due to the fact that he was relying entirely on Merton's initial concept of anomie, which Merton reformulated in consequent publications, admitting that his initial theory did not adequately address this point. Ibid.

⁴³ Such a framework has been established, according to Deflem, by B.D. Johnson, who argued that "regulation and integration are in Durkheim's approach identical." Ibid.

example of anomia rather than anomie. Jilek resolved the relationship between individual cases of anomic depression and a general social state of anomie by “relating anomie to the concepts of relative deprivation and cultural identity confusion.” Deflem, however, argued that Jilek’s approach “rest[ed] on a reductionist view of [...] Durkheim’s sociological concept of anomie, because Jilek explain[ed] a psychosocial syndrome of individuals, anomic depression, by referring to a particular state of society.” Durkheim was adamant that social facts could only explain and be explained by other social facts and “as they form[ed] a reality *sui generis*, [could not] be equated with their individual manifestations.”⁴⁴

Clearly, existing applications of anomie as an explanatory framework for social disintegration among Aboriginal peoples are in need of revision. Perhaps an even greater error than teleological arguments and misapplications of meanings is the tendency to limit anomie to studies of social dysfunction. In some respects, Elton Mayo anticipated the point I wish to make when he echoed Maurice Halbwachs’ observation that “study of a social void can lead to nothing but observation of the disasters which occur in such a void [...] [and] researches thus directed do need to be balanced by the development of inquiries in other social situations than the pathological.”⁴⁵

Although Durkheim and Merton focused their studies on disintegration and dysfunction, the questions they asked of social systems are universally relevant and can certainly be applied in “social situations [other] than the pathological.” Not all scholars of anomie placed such great stress on goals as Merton but individual and social aims appear consistently in discussions of anomie. Investigating people’s aims in any context is a

⁴⁴ Ibid., 632.

⁴⁵ Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), 135.

worthwhile endeavour that can provide valuable insights into society's needs, priorities and direction. It hardly needs to be said that means – the institutions and resources that people have available to them – to a large extent determine quality of life for both individuals and societies. Moreover, Durkheim's insights into state regulation, as presented in *Division of Labor*, draw attention to conditions necessary to establish effective relations between a populace and its governing body.

These themes will be investigated in full in the following chapters but first a disclaimer may be necessary. My use of anomie will no doubt be considered by some a methodological and theoretical violation of Durkheim's and Merton's formulations, thereby making me guilty of the same wrongs outlined above, so I would like to offer a defence in advance. As Marco Orrù made clear in his history of the concept, anomie has no single, agreed-upon meaning and transformation seems to be its dominant trait.⁴⁶ This was also recognized by Deflem who conceded that anomie had “undergone transformations *within* the field of sociology,” as well as in psychiatry.⁴⁷ No matter how closely one may adhere to a single formulation, therefore, they will inevitably be in violation of others, even within a single field. Furthermore, I avoid the main criticism leveled at Jilek by Deflem by not claiming to base my approach “on the original insights of Durkheim and Merton.”⁴⁸ In fact, though I make use of Durkheim's and Merton's insights into society and its functioning, I

⁴⁶ The etymology of anomie can be easily traced to its Greek origin, *anomia*, which referred to an “absence of law.” Semantically, however, the meaning “varies greatly throughout the literature, reflecting specific concerns of different epochs and cultures,” including “ruthlessness and *hybris* [...] anarchy and intemperance [...] sin and wickedness [...] unrighteousness or unwritten law [...] irregularity or formal transgression [...] a positive characteristic of modern morality [...] and a human condition of insatiability.” Orrù, *Anomie*, 2.

⁴⁷ Deflem, “From Anomie to Anomia,” 628-629.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 629.

am not, strictly speaking, engaging with anomie since social disintegration does not constitute the starting point for my investigation.

Instead, *open-ended* questions about goals, means and state regulation will be applied to data collected by researchers working on what has commonly come to be known as the Hawthorn Report. This project was conceived in 1954 when the Department of Citizenship and Immigration commissioned the University of British Columbia to conduct a study of “modern Indian life” in the province. This undertaking was indicative of changing times and changing attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples in the 1950s. The horrors of the Second World War had left their mark on the public consciousness and people began to draw comparisons between refugee and concentration camps and the poor living conditions found on reserves. The Department of Indian Affairs received the brunt of this criticism, as both Native and non-Native groups called for greater investment in economic development on reserves with the hope of improving social conditions and bringing the standard of living in line with non-Native communities. Some of the called-for changes became possible as the DIA underwent its own transformation during this period. In 1950 responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred from the Department of Mines and Resources to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. The change in departments implied a change in focus and approach as well. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration “had greater research and liaison capability than Mines and Resources and was interested, more generally, in issues of citizenship and training.” Commissioning the Hawthorn report was one of the first orders of business for the Department newly tasked with administering Indian affairs.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Byron Plant, “The Politics of Indian Administration: A Revisionist History of Intrastate Relations in Mid-Twentieth Century British Columbia” (PhD diss. University of Saskatchewan, 2009), 156-158.

Another key motivation for the Hawthorn report was the gradual transfer of responsibility for Indian administration from the federal government to provincial governments. Byron Plant has examined the nature and implications of the devolution of federal responsibility for health, education, economic development and welfare to provincial governments during this period in his dissertation, “The Politics of Indian Administration: A Revisionist History of Intrastate Relations in Mid-Twentieth Century British Columbia.” It was a significant policy shift that motivated and informed the study under review here. Hawthorn recognized that “the increasing integration of the Indian into Canadian life means that he is moving towards those responsibilities and services linked with the Province.” Clearly, “many important issues [would] hinge on the mode of this integration” and Hawthorn’s team tailored a number of their recommendations to direct and inform the policies guiding provincial integration of Indian affairs.⁵⁰ Each of these concerns is visible within the structure of the Hawthorn report, specifically the focus on economic conditions, the need for improved administration, and the recommendations aimed at guiding provincial integration. Although the DIA did increase resources aimed at economic development on reserves, Plant has demonstrated that these programs achieved little success. Some of the specific factors contributing to these failures will be discussed in Chapter III.

Dr. Harry B. Hawthorn, an anthropologist employed at the University of British Columbia, was appointed Director of the Project with Dr. Cyril S. Belshaw, also an anthropologist, as Assistant Director and Dr. Stuart Jamieson, an economist, as a third

⁵⁰ Harry Hawthorn, Cyril Belshaw and Stuart Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), viii.

administrative staff member. Together they assembled a team of students majoring or doing graduate work in anthropology, economics, psychology and sociology (some of whom went on to become prominent anthropologists in their own right) and put them to work as researchers on Aboriginal reserves.⁵¹ Fieldwork was done during the summer of 1954, from May to the end of September, with researchers spending anywhere from one to six weeks in a community. During that time, the researchers lived on reserves doing interviews with community members, observing activities and interactions and collecting notes. Twenty-three communities were chosen for study with the objective of representing the “variations in cultural and natural areas, languages, contemporary resources, inter-group relations, employment, size and plan of community, religion, degree of assimilation, and urbanization.”⁵² The final report, published in 1958, brought together the information collected through field work, existing ethnographic knowledge and special data gathered on criminology, welfare and resources for a comprehensive account of contemporary Indian life on B.C. reserves.⁵³

The fieldnotes collected by researchers during the course of the study are part of the Harry Hawthorn fonds at the University of British Columbia Archives. These fieldnotes have not, to the best of my knowledge, been reviewed or used by historians in any significant way. Yet, they form a treasure trove of information that nicely complements the report itself. While the report is a comprehensive synthesis of all the collected information, the fieldnotes provide individual voices – the opinions and experiences of men, women and

⁵¹ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, v; Helen Codere, “Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson: The Indians of British Columbia,” review of *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*, by Harry Hawthorn, Cyril Belshaw and Stuart Jamieson, *American Anthropologist* 61 (1959): 525.

⁵² Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 3, 6-8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vi.

sometimes children – in vivid detail. The result is a multi-dimensional glimpse into reserve life in 1950s B.C.

However, appreciation of the information collected by Hawthorn’s researchers must be balanced with a critical understanding of its nature and limitations. From the moment these young researchers stepped on reserves they had to navigate their way through competing motivations and misunderstandings influenced by their own personal lives and abilities, the perceptions and interests of reserve residents, as well as the years of historical abuse and cultural differences underlying these exchanges. Each of the researchers was tasked with integrating him or herself within a Native community in order to learn about its structure and residents. A number of factors influenced how successful the researchers would be. The researcher’s gender and race influenced how readily they would be accepted within a given community or group. The researchers’ young age seemed to work in their favour generally and researchers who brought their families to reserves may have gained acceptance more easily than those who lived and worked on their own.⁵⁴

Hawthorn gave “students complete freedom to attain rapport by the methods they found the easiest and most natural to them” and was pleased with the acceptance students gained on reserves. Records indicate that some students earned a great deal of confidence among community members and, on occasion, were invited to perform specific tasks or roles. Other students found a “business-like” approach more effective when conducting interviews and collecting information. Both methods could have their advantages and drawbacks. A “business-like” approach may have precluded frank discussion and the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

sharing of personal information. On the other hand, developing close ties with a few individuals or families could have prohibited the researcher from developing relations with other members of the community, especially if it meant crossing long-standing divisions and rivalries.⁵⁵

Although every researcher was expected to collect information on each of the topics selected for study by Hawthorn and his team, they were also encouraged to pursue themes according to their prominence on reserves or the researchers' own interests.⁵⁶ Invariably, this meant that some trends, whether criminal, educational or agricultural, were given more weight in some communities than others and did not necessarily reflect the actual conditions on that reserve. It is also important to remember that only a partial picture could be drawn of each reserve simply because of the timing and limitations of the study. Fieldwork was done during the summer of 1954 when on many reserves up to half of their populations was absent due to employment migrations; and observing any community for only a few weeks of a single year would limit understanding of that community.

The outcome of the fieldwork was also influenced by the role researchers were thought to play. Hawthorn noted that while some community leaders easily grasped the nature of the study being conducted, others required time to build understanding and trust. Reserve residents likewise did not always fully understand who the students were, what they represented, or what the nature of their business was. It would have been easy for people to assume that the researchers were employed by a government agency and would have the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 10.

power to effect welfare, schooling, or housing conditions.⁵⁷ This could easily have influenced which aspects of their lives people chose to share and how the information was presented, such as the expressed concern with education.

Yet, despite the limitations associated with any historical or anthropological study, (especially ones that attempt to work across racial and cultural divisions and navigate the complex power dynamics contained therein) Hawthorn and his team managed to conduct a study that has largely stood the test of time. Hawthorn's researcher seemed to avoid many (though by no means all) of the racist assumptions that defined their times and that would have severely limited the value of their work. The time restrictions, biases and misunderstandings were partly offset by the variety of communities studied, their wide geographical distribution, and the number of researchers involved. If work in some communities was impacted by small populations, the personal interests of researchers or misconceptions that skewed responses, work done in other communities helped put it in context. Most importantly, the Hawthorn study's fieldnotes provide access to people's thoughts, desires and opinions, which, despite the problematic nature of such sources, is critical for balancing a history of people's actions.

Although twenty-three communities were chosen for study, the Hawthorn fonds contain data on nineteen communities.⁵⁸ Of those nineteen, I have chosen four that cover a wide geographical area and represent a variety of industries. Beginning in the southwestern

⁵⁷ Hawthorn, 8.

⁵⁸ For a list of communities "finally studied" see Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 6-7. The Harry Hawthorn fonds contain files on Alberni, Anahim, Alert Bay, Bella Coola, Cheacten, Chu Chua, Duncan, Fort St. James, Hazelton, Kamloops, Katzie, Kitimat Mission, Kootenays, Lytton, Moricetown, Okanagan, Prince Rupert Canneries, Skidegate, and Ucluelet.

part of the province is Lytton Reserve (Lytton Agency), located about 180 miles up the Fraser River from Vancouver, bordering the town of Lytton, with a population of 627 in 1954. Many people were involved in some aspect of ranching, often as paid labourers. Hop and berry picking was also a common form of employment as was railroad work for the men.⁵⁹ Women tended to be employed as stenographers, waitresses and cleaning women and engaged in some handicraft work as well.⁶⁰ James Hirabayashi, one of the researchers working on Lytton reserve, explained that seasonal jobs were available for men, often for railroad and highway construction companies needing temporary labourers during the summer months, and though some of these jobs could be counted on from year to year, they did not usually last more than three or four months. Summer jobs were hard to count on because the number of workers hired each season for construction jobs also depended on the number of bids acquired by the highway companies and the amount of damage to be repaired by the railroads. Ranchers also hired additional labour during their busy seasons.⁶¹

David Hett, the Indian Agent for Lytton Agency at the time of the interviews, was trying to establish an agricultural co-operative and pushing strongly for education. He was trying “to get the [children] some training and get them off the reserve. Mostly because

⁵⁹ Migratory farm labour was a major source of employment for Lytton reserve residents. Labourers followed the maturing crops, moving from strawberries to raspberries, currents, potatoes, hops and finally apple harvests. Men and women of all ages would participate in the work and steady workers would plan vacations during picking seasons in order to work the harvests. University of British Columbia Library, University Archives, Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays; Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

⁶⁰ Many older women on the reserve made baskets or Cowichan sweaters for sale to White tourists or collectors. The income generated from handicrafts was limited, however, and did not justify the time and effort required for production. This did not deter some of the older women who continued their efforts to “keep busy” but there was little indication that younger girls would be similarly occupied since instruction in knitting Cowichan sweaters was discontinued in the local school. Ibid., Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community; Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays.

⁶¹ Ibid., Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays.

there [were not] any opportunities [on reserve].” It was a strategy Hett might not have recommended for other reserves but at Lytton “the ranching possibilities [were] very limited and the population [was] increasing. The chances for industry [were] limited [as well].”⁶² The band had been able to acquire some income from stumpage fees but Hett claimed there was not much timber on reserve land and it was being logged off.⁶³ There were also few material resources on reserve lands that could be exploited to any significant extent. One exception was the possibility of a jade quarry but industrialization on the reserve was not possible because the Indian Department did not have the required capital. Agricultural land was sparse, with only about four self-supporting ranches (many ranchers had to work part-time to supplement their incomes).⁶⁴

About 200 children were attending St. George’s School at this time, which offered classes up to the 6th grade. Older students would then attend the high school in Lytton. In the past, days at the school were split between working and studying but starting in 1952 full days were devoted to school studies. According to the school supervisor, they “[did not] train [the students] for anything special – just give them a general education.” Students who

⁶² Ibid., Box 24 File 4 Lytton Agents. James Hirabayashi predicted that “the best opportunity for the coming generation [was] to learn a trade and seek work off the Reserve” since opportunities for workers with advanced training were virtually nonexistent on the reserve and “[t]he available steady work, which [was] limited in itself, [was] already absorbed” and with “incoming immigrants there [were] even fewer opportunities.” Ibid., Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays.

⁶³ Ibid., Box 24 File 4 Lytton Agents.

⁶⁴ Agricultural prospects in the narrow Fraser Valley were generally limited because of uneven land not suitable for cultivation. White ranchers’ claims to some of the better land contributed to the problem. The shortage was evident in the many land disputes complicating inheritances and farming ventures at Lytton. Eileen Quinn, Emily Abbott and Alfred Munroe all cited problems with land disputes on reserve. Ibid., Box 24 File 5 Lytton Agriculture; Box 24 File 7 Lytton Business; Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community; Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays; Box 24 File 14 Lytton Exchange.

finished high school could go to Vancouver for further training. Girls could specialize in secretarial work or nursing and a few had gone on to work as aides in Coqualeeza.⁶⁵

Moving northwest from Lytton we come to Anaham⁶⁶ Reserve (Williams Lake Agency), which was about seven miles from Alexis Creek, a small town with grocery stores, a beer parlour, post office and other amenities. The reserve consisted of roughly 15 square miles of land extending from the Chilcotin River up to rolling range areas. Nearby meadowlands could produce excellent alfalfa hay, provided the land was sufficiently irrigated but water shortages made this problematic. Anahim and Zenzaco Creeks supplied water for the reserve before flowing into the Chilcotin but, as E.P. Lok explained in his essay, “the soil [was] dry and the volume of water in the creeks, even were they more extensively tapped, would [have been] insufficient for all the villagers of the Rancherie.”⁶⁷ An additional factor limiting land use was that much of the land had not been broken and the job could not be done without a tractor.⁶⁸

The reserve overlooked a flat stretch of land, which was used for dry farming since there was no irrigation. After haying finished in the fall, cattle were let onto this land. There was also land in the abovementioned meadows, which was more productive because of the availability of water so people spent a lot of time there gardening, raising cattle, and cutting

⁶⁵ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

⁶⁶ The spelling for “Anaham” differs. In the published report “Anaham” is used, whereas in the archival files the spelling is “Anahim.” For the sake of consistency and to avoid confusion, I have adopted the spelling used in the report throughout this work, including the citations.

⁶⁷ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 27 Anaham Community; Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁶⁸ The limited amount of land also prevented the band from making money by renting out the pasture to Whites since band members needed all the available land for pasturing their cattle. Ibid., Box 15 File 23 Anaham Agriculture; Box 15 File 37 Anaham Leadership.

hay. Since this land was 10 to 50 miles from the reserve proper some people built log cabins or barns there while others used wagons or tents while working in the meadows.⁶⁹

Most Anaham people at the time were cattle ranchers with herds ranging from 1-2 to 75-80 head. They all owned horses for work and riding and bred them with nearby wild horses. Those who raised more hay than their own herds required sold it to White ranchers, which could be quite profitable. Ranching alone was generally not enough to support people so part-time or seasonal jobs were necessary. This could include guiding hunting parties, trapping, miscellaneous manual labour such as sawing wood, building dams and ditches, or cutting Christmas trees in the winter. Jobs could also be found working for non-Indian ranchers doing contract work such as haying or fencing.⁷⁰

Some women engaged in handicrafts, making moccasins, gloves and coats from deerskins, though such items were hard to sell and not enough money was made to justify the work.⁷¹ Women also trapped and shot squirrels and muskrats, hunted and fished and helped with haying. Other sources of employment were not readily available to women since both house cleaning and waitressing jobs were very limited.⁷²

In early July salmon came up the Chilcotin and people camped on the banks of the river (40 miles from the reserve) to catch fish for the winter. From then until fall they were occupied with haying. From July to September whole families contracted out and got paid per ton of hay and this income sustained them through the winter.⁷³ By the end of August families with children started returning to the village or sent their children back with other

⁶⁹ Ibid., Box 15 File 27 Anaham Community; Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 15 File 30 Anaham Employment; Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁷¹ Ibid., Box 15 File 35 Anaham Households.

⁷² Ibid., Box 15 File 24 Anaham Attitudes to Work; Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁷³ Ibid., Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays; Box 15 File 40 Anaham Religion.

families. In the fall haying finished, and men started looking for work cutting Christmas trees, contracting out to ranches for various jobs or running traplines. People remained in the village over the winter months but trapping continued until April or even May. In spring and summer hay and garden crops were planted, cattle were prepared for sale and fences and irrigation systems repaired. Once planting was done families contracted out for fencing jobs and the village was left semi-deserted.⁷⁴ As with many other reserves, the high level of mobility made it difficult to keep children in school year-round.⁷⁵

Further northwest from Anaham was Kitamaat⁷⁶ (Bella Coola Agency). The village was usually home to about 500 residents, though at the time of the fieldwork a little over half the people were away from the village.⁷⁷ The researchers, Peter Pineo and Michael Ames, reported that none of the houses were “completely furnished, finished, and landscaped” and the only “roads” were two sand paths that ran in front of the houses. Few services were available in Kitamaat during the summer. There were not enough people on reserve to justify running the powerhouse or lights and there was little water in the dam. Only one of the reserve stores remained open during the summer, and only for one hour each day. However, once Butedale cannery closed and Alcan opened more families chose to stay in the village during the summer, though people still often crossed over to the Alcan side of the bay for shopping, shows and other entertainment.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid., Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Box 15 File 29 Anaham Education.

⁷⁶ This is the spelling used in the final Hawthorn report whereas “Kitimat Mission” is used in the archival files. I will be using “Kitamaat” throughout, including citations, to avoid confusion.

⁷⁷ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 22 File 5 Kitamaat Mission Census. At the time of the fieldwork, half the houses on reserve were empty with the men fishing and living at either Gardner Canal or Butedale camps. Others were working in canneries at Clemtu, Namu or Port Edwards. Ibid., Box 22 File 6 Kitamaat Mission Community.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Box 22 File 6 Kitamaat Mission Community.

The opening of the Aluminum Company of Canada (Alcan) across the bay from Kitamaat and the closing of Butedale cannery were major sources of change in Kitamaat. For years, the five fishing seasons had provided employment and determined village life.⁷⁹ Winter herring took place from November to late March and could result in significant earnings – up to \$1,000. Halibut fishing was done from May to June 15th but it was not very profitable and few men made the effort after Alcan opened. Spring salmon was fished from June 15 to July and drew the most fishermen from their Alcan jobs even though earnings were not as high at the time of the fieldwork as they had been in previous times. Sockeye fishing was done from July to August 15 and was considered one of the best runs by local fishermen. Fall fishing for dog salmon and humpbacks was from August to the end of September. Many men continued to take part in fishing but the number of fall fishermen declined after Alcan opened.⁸⁰

Butedale Cannery collapsed in 1951 but Butedale remained a reduction plant in wintertime and a fishing camp in summer time. Villagers left for Butedale at the end of June and stayed until September because most of the Kitamaat seine boats operated for Canadian Fish at Butedale and some people could find work mending nets or doing other odd jobs.⁸¹ In the summer of 1954, 223 men, women and children moved to fishing camps

⁷⁹ When the Canadian Fishing Company opened Butedale Cannery in 1914 local Kitamaats started commercial fishing in skiffs and dugouts. By the 1940s gas boats were replacing skiffs and fishermen started purchasing powered gill netters. Over the years, Kitamaat fishermen increasingly fished for Butedale instead of making the trek to their traditional fishing grounds at Rivers Inlet. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁸¹ Butedale continued to be used as the headquarters for seiners and gillnetters, although fish was packed to Rupert or Vancouver following the closure of the cannery. The cold storage plant also serviced packers and fish boats during summers. The researcher reported 100 Whites and 150 Natives at Butedale the summer of 1954 with more coming in on the weekends. Butedale continued to draw workers and their families because they could live

and canneries, leaving 228 people in the village.⁸² Butedale had also traditionally been a major source of employment for women but after the cannery closed only about two women continued to work in the net loft at Butedale with another 10 women working for wages in Namu, Klemtu and Port Edward canneries.⁸³

Construction for Alcan began in 1952 and the company started hiring for smelter operations and longshoremen in 1954. The Kitamaat Band Council and Alcan made a mutually beneficial pact when Alcan agreed to give Kitamaat men preference for hiring.⁸⁴ Although the majority of men at Kitamaat preferred to go fishing, they were still steady workers in comparison to general workers at Alcan, most of whom were men brought in from Vancouver. These men were labeled “sixty day wonder[s]” because they stayed only long enough to fill their minimum contracts before leaving.⁸⁵ Henry Amos claimed that half the men employed at Alcan quit to go fishing and many others would as well if they had access to boats.⁸⁶ Several men reported that Alcan and other construction outfits did not

on the job site rather than crossing the inlet every day to work at Alcan. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays; Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁸² The number of people leaving for Butedale each summer declined following the opening of Alcan. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁸³ A few men could also find work in the canneries during summer time. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁸⁴ Gordon Robinson, Chief of Kitamaat Band at the time, claimed a verbal agreement was sufficient since Alcan needed Kitamaat men for labour. Any discrimination that took place, according to the researcher, was against local labour, not Kitamaat men specifically, because Alcan had a monopoly over local labour and could therefore pay lower salaries to local men if it wished. Robinson and the other councilors were instrumental in negotiations with Alcan over the sale of Reserve #5. The Council contradicted the advice of Indian Agent Arneil who favoured the sale, culminating in a decisive vote against the sale in May 1954. Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work; Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work.

⁸⁶ Men like Harry Amos who relied entirely on fishing for their income took issue with part-time fishermen for depleting the fishery and creating more competition. Casual fishing ventures were becoming more difficult, however, as companies restricted access to boats. Butedale only gave boats to top fishermen and demanded 50% of the cost upfront in cash.

object to them leaving for various fishing ventures and they were always able to return to their jobs.⁸⁷

Some men preferred logging because of perks not available at Alcan, such as better wages and winters off.⁸⁸ Three or four small logging outfits were operating within a four-hour boat ride of the village in the summer of 1954 and employed nine villagers at the time of fieldwork.⁸⁹ Trapping was an option during the winter for those who did not want to work at Alcan, though some trap lines were compromised when Alcan took over lands previously used for trapping.⁹⁰ Other trap lines had not been used much since prices for pelts fell too low to make it worthwhile.⁹¹ There were also a few entrepreneurs on reserve who operated their own stores or food stands, in one case with ambitious plans for expansion. A co-op store had also been in operation on the reserve for several years by this time.⁹²

The importance of mobility in the local economy posed a problem for schools. Jim McLeod, the teacher, explained that “establish[ing] the class as a unit” was a challenge because families moved to Butedale in the spring and returned in the fall so there were

Down payments of \$1,000 or more, in addition to the cost of nets and other equipment made boats inaccessible to many. Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment; Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays; Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission, Attitudes to Work.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work.

⁸⁹ Local logging camps suffered labour losses after Alcan opened and drew workers away from other ventures. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁹⁰ Kitamaat residents also blamed the townsite and local logging outfits for destroying trap lines. Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work; Box 22 File 14 Kitamaat Mission Households; Box 22 File 17 Kitamaat Mission Miscellaneous; Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁹¹ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁹² Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work; Box 22 File 4 Kitamaat Mission Business.

often no students in the first week of school, only a couple in the second week and so on. In some cases children left the Kitamaat school in late fall or winter to go to the Butedale school but not all of them were accepted because the school was declared full. School attendance improved, however, after Alcan opened. Mrs. Patterson, the other teacher at the Kitamaat School, said she rarely had problems with students leaving school for family fishing trips, possibly because Mrs. Patterson taught younger children. From her experience, when parents left for these trips, they made arrangements with someone in the village to care for their children. Rough seas further complicated both school and work problems during the winter. People sometimes had to miss work because of dangerous conditions and although students could have potentially attended the school at Alcan once it opened, bad weather conditions would have likely prevented them from doing so during the winter months.⁹³

Finally, northeast of Kitamaat was Hazelton (Babine Agency) where people were engaged in a variety of seasonal pursuits.⁹⁴ The nearby town of Hazelton had several cafes and a hotel, two general stores, an HBC store and a drugstore, a bank, Indian Office, hospital and other amenities. Whites and Indians often socialized at the beer parlour and both participated in weekly baseball games.⁹⁵ Men were employed in various aspects of logging and millwork such as skidding, cutting poles and hauling lumber.⁹⁶ Some men purchased pole limits and hired other villagers to work for them. One father and son-in-law

⁹³ Ibid., Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

⁹⁴ Hazelton consisted of three communities: Hazelton, Kitwancool and Kitwanga. The communities were studied for three weeks as “a unit” when “most of the residents were away in canneries.” A researcher later “followed up further people in Prince Rupert.” Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 7.

⁹⁵ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 20 File 5 Hazelton Community.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

team purchased a mill and had a number of men working for them. They cut poles and sold them to a company in Hazelton and considered it good, steady work. However, this could involve a lot of expense if the area to be logged was not well chosen.⁹⁷ According to one unidentified informant the reserve was intended for cannery workers and was therefore limited to a mile and a half by a mile. As a result, men such as him and others who depended on the land for their employment had to work on crown lands and pay taxes.⁹⁸ There were also several instances of men not getting paid for their labour.⁹⁹ One local mill did not pay the men for their labour so it was shut down and the Labour Board was alerted to the matter.¹⁰⁰ Residents also reported problems with Hazelton Forest Products and the unfair prices they set for poles.¹⁰¹

Other men in Hazelton were engaged in fishing, though not everyone was able to get work from the cannery.¹⁰² Although a lot of people went to canneries to work, many others stayed behind because fishing required significant expenditures for equipment and logging outfits offered a viable alternative for employment. Cannery work was still critical for the community, however, because there was not enough work available at the mills to support everyone. Fishing was also appealing because of the possibility of large earnings in short periods of time that could support families for the whole year.¹⁰³ A number of men took on various jobs such as plumbing, carpentry, mining or truck driving and two men

⁹⁷ Ibid., Box 20 File 3 Hazelton Business.

⁹⁸ The informant's mill was located on crown land. Ibid., Box 20 File 15 Hazelton Miscellaneous.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

¹⁰² Solomon Goot explained that the cannery only hired men who were good fishermen, making it necessary for others to find alternate sources of income. Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

¹⁰³ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

owned stores.¹⁰⁴ One man became the village undertaker because there was no one else to do the job.¹⁰⁵ Some men trapped but quit after prices dropped.¹⁰⁶ Women had a difficult time finding employment. There was some work available in local cafes and hospitals but few Indian girls were hired in Terrace or Hazelton, though there was less discrimination there than in other places. In general there were few opportunities available to girls after they finished high school.¹⁰⁷ Despite numerous obstacles to earning an income, people in Hazelton generally considered themselves self-sufficient and independent of agency aid.¹⁰⁸

The day school in Hazelton was no longer in operation by 1954 so children attended the same school as Whites.¹⁰⁹ The school was generally well thought of, though there were some complaints. All the children were put in a single room rather than separating the younger ones from the older ones, making it harder for the children to learn. Also, grade 12 students had to complete some courses by correspondence because in-class instruction was not available.¹¹⁰ Space limitations, both at the local high school and the school in Edmonton (attended by one Hazelton girl) prevented access to secondary education for some students.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment; Box 20 File 13 Hazelton Interpersonal Relations; Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Box 20 File 15 Hazelton Miscellaneous.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work; Box 20 File 5 Hazelton Community; Box 20 File 12 Hazelton Households; Box 20 File 17 Hazelton White Contact; Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

¹⁰⁸ Such independence often resulted from frustration and disappointment with the lack of agency aid. Ibid., Box 20 File 1 Hazelton Agents.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Box 20 File 13 Hazelton Interpersonal Relations; Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

It should be apparent that social circumstances were in flux on Aboriginal reserves in the 1950s and in many instances people were facing resource limitations that did not bode well for the future. It was a transformative decade deserving of closer study. Applying specific aspects of Merton's and Durkheim's anomie theories to this period of Aboriginal history should prove to be a novel and fruitful exercise. Anomie was a convenient explanation for the social ills seen among Aboriginal communities in the 1960s and 1970s and often formed the basis of studies conducted by sociologists, psychologists and criminologists. The drug and alcohol addictions, welfare dependency, suicides and familial breakdowns that came to represent Aboriginal reserves in later decades, were a mere whisper in the 1950s. Consequently, scholars interested in fodder for their analyses of anomie would have seen little of interest to them in that decade. However, in the following chapters I will demonstrate that when anomie is broken down into its component parts, a number of analytical tools emerge that are not tied to social dysfunction and can be used to better understand a neglected period.

In Chapter II, I distill Merton's theory into fundamental questions about individuals' aims and means in order to examine occupational, educational and housing conditions on Aboriginal reserves. With this approach, I am able to draw out attitudes previously neglected by historians and counter lingering stereotypes. Chapter III follows a similar trajectory. I focus on Durkheim's analysis of the state's role in social functioning, a neglected aspect of *Division of Labor*, and examine relations between government and Aboriginal peoples in light of the criteria outlined by Durkheim. The resulting analysis highlights the importance of clear and consistent governance, thus adding an important dimension to the discussion of goals and means in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

“Ideas as Forces”: Examining Aboriginal Goals as the Basis of Action

Within anomie literature goals are a critical factor in determining individual and social welfare, and as such, personal aims expressed by individuals are concrete topics for study. The historical study of anomie is consistent with general changes in social and cultural history that have seen increasing attention paid to ideas as opposed to simply experience and happenings unmitigated by meaning. Jean-Marie Guyau challenged scholars to consider the articulation of goals as the basis of action. “Reason gives us glimpses of two different worlds,” Guyau wrote, “the *real* world, in which we live, and a certain *ideal* world, in which we also live.” Although “in regard to the ideal world people no longer agree” and “everyone has his own conception of it,” upon this conception “depends the way in which we compel ourselves to act.” It would be impossible, therefore, “to neglect this very fruitful source of activity.”¹ Guyau was echoing Alfred Fouillée’s notion of “ideas as forces” by claiming that “[t]o understand is already the beginning in us of the realization of that which we understand.” Actions spring from ideas so that “conceiv[ing] something better than that which exists is the first labour in realizing it.” The “[c]onception of aim” and “effort to attain” are one and the same.² From this perspective, a desire for better education or modern housing was a critical first step to its realization.

The “ideal world” did not feature significantly in Émile Durkheim’s works nor did it have the causal importance Guyau attributed to it. Nevertheless, a sense of direction and

¹ Jean-Marie Guyau, *A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction*, trans. Gertrude Kapteyn (London: Watts & Co., 1898), 137-138.

² *Ibid.*, 92.

purpose was a necessary condition if the division of labour was to function normally, a stipulation Durkheim stressed in his defense of the division of labour. He acknowledged that the division of labor was frequently “accused of degrading the individual by making him a machine” and concurred insofar as an individual who “does not know whither the operations he performs are tending” and “relates them to no end...can only continue to work through routine.” He took exception, however, to the notion that the division of labour “produce[d] these consequences because of a necessity of its own nature.” This degrading state was brought about “only in exceptional and abnormal circumstances.” When the division of labour is functioning normally, individuals are not required to isolate themselves within their special roles. Instead, an individual is expected to “keep himself in constant relations with neighboring functions, take conscience of their needs, of the changes which they undergo, etc.” When this situation is established, the worker understands that his movements, “tend, in some way, towards an end that he conceives more or less distinctly” and “[h]e feels that he is serving something.” Even if the worker’s daily occupation is highly “special[ized] and uniform [...] it is that of an intelligent being, for it has direction, and he knows it.”³

Goals retained their central status in Robert Merton’s work but for the first time they were seen as having potentially negative implications. In “Social Structure and Anomie,” Merton considered “culturally defined goals, purposes, and interests” to be one of the two important “elements of social and cultural structure.” As such, these “cultural aspirations” form “a basic, but not the exclusive, component of [...] ‘designs for group living.’” Nonconformist behaviour becomes a possibility within this scheme when there

³ Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor In Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1964, c1933), 371-373.

develops “a disproportionate, at times, a virtually exclusive, stress upon the value of specific goals, involving relatively slight concern with the institutionally appropriate modes of attaining these goals.”⁴ Put another way, what Merton is saying, in contrast with Guyau and Durkheim, is that a strong sense of goals can be detrimental to social functioning if it is not balanced by an equal emphasis on and access to the required means. Although this study does not evaluate the *emphasis* of goals relative to means within Aboriginal communities, it does attempt to stand the two “elements” side by side to demonstrate that the realities of Aboriginal people’s socio-economic circumstances were often the products of limited means rather than limited aspirations.

This approach is somewhat unique because, despite the importance of goals within social functioning, they are rarely considered when anomie theories are applied to Aboriginal communities, especially in historical contexts, or, if they are, they take the form of broad generalizations. Jerrold E. Levy and Stephen J. Kunitz, for example, use a native-newcomer binary to identify four sub-groups among the Navajo tribe in terms of their subsistence goals: “1) those with traditional goals who are engaged in pastoralism, 2) those with traditional goals unable to be so employed, 3) those with White-influenced goals who are employed steadily both on and off reservations, and 4) those with White goals who are unable to gain wage employment.”⁵ Others have rejected the binary and argued that activities often seen as symbolic of social disintegration on Aboriginal reserves are actually “compatible with the aboriginal goals and values of many tribes.” Thomas J. Young, for example, referred to scholars who suggested “that flamboyant drinking and public fighting

⁴ Robert K. Merton, “Social Structure and Anomie,” *American Sociological Review* 3, no. 5 (Oct., 1938): 672-673.

⁵ Jerrold E. Levy and Stephen J. Kunitz, “Indian Reservations, Anomie, and Social Pathologies,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (Summer, 1971): 103.

are viewed as anything but a sign of moral, social, or psychological disintegration among young Apache males.” Rather than being “an anomic response to poverty and rapid social change,” such activities are considered “a rite of passage that is compatible with such aboriginal activities as hunting, raiding, and warfare.”⁶

This is not to say that Aboriginal people’s goals have been entirely neglected. James Frideres saw Aboriginal organizations as aimless, though he acknowledged that changes in direction and consensus took place over time. Initially, Aboriginal organizations were “tied to specific concerns, such as particular land claims” and “had a single focus, were relatively simple in structure, and were limited to particular areas or groups of Natives.” Frideres saw a change occur in the mid-1950s, however, when these organizations began a metamorphosis, “becom[ing] multifaceted, complex in structure, and representative of Natives from all across Canada.”⁷ Broader and more complex representation, perhaps inevitably, did not amount to a set of determined goals. Frideres pointed to “the demands of Native peoples,” which in his assessment “frequently [...] lack focus and direction, or fail to consider financial costs and problems of implementation.”⁸ Yet, Frideres did acknowledge the existence of a central, though perhaps nebulous, aim: “many Native groups would like to achieve *sovereignty of Native government*” and would “continue to press for additional power and to intensify their efforts to gain more control over their lives.”⁹ E. Palmer Patterson described a similar trend in Aboriginal communities in his study of early twentieth century

⁶ Thomas J. Young, “Suicide and Homicide Among Native Americans: Anomie or Social Learning?” *Psychological Reports* 68 (1991): 1137.

⁷ James S. Frideres, *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1983), 233. Frideres was referencing E. Palmer Patterson, *The Canadian Indians: A History Since 1500* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-MacMillan Canada Ltd., 1972).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 293.

Aboriginal political activism, “Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence.” Patterson wrote, “[i]n matters of education, religion, economics, and government, Indians cannot be said to adhere to any single point of view” but he also acknowledged that “there are certain general aims which characterize most or all Indians.” Central among these was “the desire for freedom to control their affairs in political, social, and economic matters, and to have educational equality with the Whites.”¹⁰

Perhaps one of the most overlooked goals expressed by Aboriginal people was the desire for steady employment. John Lutz, Paige Raibmon and Rolf Knight have made significant contributions to our understanding of Aboriginal economic history and their works have helped resituate the history of Aboriginal people’s seasonal work cycles by highlighting their tenacity and resourcefulness and challenging stereotypes of laziness and poor work habits. However, the stress on traditional seasonal work patterns has obscured an important component of Aboriginal economic history: the desire for steady work and the economic security and stability it provides. Raibmon explored the history of hop picking, demonstrating that seasonal migrations to hop fields were one part of an economic puzzle that, combined with other pursuits, served “as an economic safety net,” allowing “Aboriginal workers [to] rely on one source of income if others failed.”¹¹ Lutz argued that Aboriginal people created a “moditional” economy by merging aspects of traditional and capitalist economies, which also entailed an economic juggling act. Knight drew attention to the importance of Aboriginal labour in the primary industries and argued that what was perceived as instability or a poor work ethic among Aboriginal people was actually a reality

¹⁰ E. Palmer Patterson, “Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence” (PhD diss. University of Washington, 1962), xiii.

¹¹ Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 114, 99.

of the resource sectors that employed them. The common thread running through these histories is (understandably) a focus on what people *did*, which has often resulted in an emphasis on seasonal work cycles. This stance also finds support within the Hawthorn Report, where the authors focused on explaining the economic position of Aboriginal people as it existed far more so than on their aspirations. However, examining the material presented in the Hawthorn fieldnotes through Merton's conception of goals and means shifts the focus to what people *wanted*, and in many cases this meant steady employment.

Interestingly, Hawthorn and his team did distinguish between *levels* and *standards* in their discussion of housing but admitted that it had “not been practicable” to examine housing standards “in a complete or systematic way” so their discussion of housing would “refer, strictly speaking, to *levels* of living.” Indeed, references to housing standards were general in nature, as when the authors noted that “a very large proportion of the Indian population is interested in improved housing and that, if materials, financing, and technical knowledge were available, a very large proportion of present housing would be replaced or substantially improved.” The Hawthorn fieldnotes do, in fact, contain a great deal of information about aspirations for better housing that can offer a balance to the emphasis on housing levels in the Hawthorn Report.¹² Much the same can be said for education. The analysis of schooling and education provided in the Hawthorn Report is extensive and several excerpts from different communities detailing “Indian [v]iews on [s]chooling” are provided. In general, “[m]any Indian parents have wanted their children to have a greater mastery of the new techniques and have supported the school in the belief that it will give

¹² The housing situation merits special attention because it points to a neglected aspect of Merton's goals/means theory – namely, the problem created when multiple legitimate, but conflicting, means are available for the achievement of a specific goal.

this mastery,” although this support “derives from varying expectations of what the school can do and from varying ideas of its results.”¹³ Apart from this brief discussion that touches on educational aspirations, the remainder of the analysis focuses on educational statistics, teachers, curriculum, and vocational training. Once again, there is much more that can be said about educational aims if the Hawthorn fieldnotes are approached with Merton’s analysis in mind.

It is also important to note that although Hawthorn and his team demonstrated a keen level of insight in the final report, they often relied on the all-too-common binaries in Aboriginal histories, which placed Aboriginal people’s lives in contrast to those of their White neighbours. In their discussion of housing conditions, Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson pondered if there was “sufficient similarity of experience among different communities to allow us to say that change is in a single direction – always away from old Indian and always toward new Canadian” and then observed that “the new, even when all old Indian traits have been lost, sometimes remains distinctly non-White.”¹⁴ The analysis of goals and means presented below sidesteps this issue by relating reserve residents’ goals to their means rather than to the goals or means of other Canadians, and without defining whether these goals and means are “traditional” or “modern,” “Indian” or “Canadian.”

Aboriginal people’s goals in 1950s Lytton, Hazelton, Anaham and Kitamaat were not in all cases identical, but general agreement was often evident with respect to education, employment and housing. Aboriginal people placed a great deal of importance on

¹³ Harry Hawthorn, Cyril Belshaw and Stuart Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 296.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.

education, invested considerable resources in their homes and, contrary to perspectives commonly presented by historians, often wished for steady work.¹⁵ The fact that they often failed to meet these needs can be explained in part by the lack of means available to them: poor teachers and lack of space in schools often complicated educational goals; the nature of primary industries, limited land and capital and changing economic circumstances made employment haphazard; limited land and irregular paychecks also prevented many home repairs and upgrades.

Yet, stereotypes regarding Aboriginal people's lack of educational goals, employment aspirations, and desire for home ownership were expressed a number of times in the course of interviews conducted by Hawthorn's field researchers. These perspectives often came from non-Aboriginal people living in close proximity to Aboriginal reserves. The storeowner at View Store in Lytton said local children "stay[ed] out of school at any excuse." The "little Brown girl," he said, was "a smart girl" but at the age of 14 had progressed only to grade three because she did not attend school regularly. When the storeowner asked her why she stayed at home she would reply that her mother was sick or gone somewhere and she had to care for the other children. He commented that "parents [did not] seem to care" if the children attended school and "[did not] make them go" if they did not want to.¹⁶ James and Joanne Hirabayashi, the researchers at Lytton also noted that Matt and Jeanette Brown, parents of the "little Brown girl" said they "would like to keep [their children] in school and give them a training" but then commented that they must not

¹⁵ In this instance, steady work did not necessarily mean working consistently 12 months/year at a single job, but living off a single job, even if it is only meant working 7-8 months/year.

¹⁶ University of British Columbia Library, University Archives, Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

“wish this too much” since the oldest girl was often required to stay home with the younger children because her mother was away or sick.¹⁷

Stereotypes about poor work habits were on full display among the Whites living or working around the Alcan plant in Kitamaat. Local Natives were seen as lazy, irresponsible, careless with their jobs and quick to abandon them. Jack MacDonald, the head first aid man for Alcan, told the researchers that in his view Native employees “were often irresponsible, took little interest in their jobs, did not work hard, would quite often take a holiday whenever they felt like it” and quit to go fishing if they did not like their jobs. Fishing was even known to pull men from their jobs after they had been promoted to straw bosses or foreman. As a result, Alcan considered Native men fit only for temporary work and would employ them only as long as there was a labour shortage.¹⁸ And housing was often a contentious issue with both Indian Agents and nearby Whites criticizing Aboriginal people’s apparent lack of care for their homes. The Arnolds, owners of a Laundromat near Lytton reserve, repeatedly expressed concern about the researchers staying on the reserve because of the dirty conditions. Mrs. Arnold had not been on the reserve in ten years, though she lived nearby, and “[did not] seem to be aware,” wrote the researcher, “that some of the houses [were] very clean.”¹⁹ Even the Wah family, who owned the general store at Lytton and seemed to have a good opinion of local Native people in general, were under the impression that all reserve homes were dirty.²⁰ Elizabeth Lok, one of the researchers at Anaham, was of the opinion that housing improvements were desired by the

¹⁷ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education. Apparently, neither the researchers nor the storeowner considered that the Brown’s apparent neglect of their daughter’s education was an unavoidable result of Mrs. Brown’s health problems and work obligations.

¹⁸ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

¹⁹ Ibid., Box 24 File 7 Lytton Business.

²⁰ Ibid., Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

priest and Indian Agent at Anaham but difficult to implement because “people have not yet learned any extensive feelings towards the types of houses they live in.”²¹

The reality, however, was much different than these attitudes suggest and this discrepancy was most apparent with regard to education. Parents interviewed by fieldworkers were aware of changing circumstances that made education a necessity and were therefore nearly unanimous in their desire to see their children educated. Many also regretted their own lack of education and the limitations this had imposed upon them. Tim Starr, who had rescued Sunrise, the local co-op store, from financial ruin and had been managing it for three years with his family’s help, expressed a common sentiment when he emphasized the importance of education for Natives “so they can compete with the [W]hite men for jobs.” Otherwise, he said, they would continue to be “left out” or restricted to labour jobs because they lacked the skills required for better employment.²²

A number of men and women expressed regret at their lack of education and job training, and in some cases made plans for further training in the hopes of obtaining specific jobs. Mary McKenzie of Hazelton told the researcher, Milena Nastich, she wished her husband, employed as a carpenter and plumber, “had some formal training.”²³ Dorothy (Dot) Grant, Art Grant’s wife and partner in their hot dog stand business, had some experience as a teacher but lacked the proper qualifications so she was taking correspondence courses to earn a high school diploma and then planned to register for

²¹ Ibid., Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essay. Lok went on to quote the agent’s comments that it was “[n]o wonder” Natives “prefer[red] to live in tents – you [do not] have to sweep a tent, you just move now and again.”

²² Ibid., Box 22 File 4 Kitamaat Mission Business; Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

²³ Ibid., Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

Normal school so she would be able to teach at one of the local day schools.²⁴ Vera Wilson and her husband Bill “often talk[ed] about trade school” as a way of achieving occupational goals. Vera wanted to be a nurse like her sister and Bill was interested in truck driving.²⁵

Many Native parents impressed the need for education upon their children in the hopes that it would lead to better jobs. Solomon Goot explained to his interviewer that he wanted his children to have a high school and college education because it would allow them to “get jobs all over.” They would not be confined to the reserve, as he was, without work, “just hav[ing] to take what comes.”²⁶ John Abbott also remarked that an education had become necessary to find work and would therefore keep his children in school as long as possible to ensure they had a better chance of succeeding.²⁷ Alfred Munroe also stressed the need for an education, even within railroad work. He explained that railroad workers were required to fill out their own cards and the section foreman were responsible for producing reports. Because of this, Munroe was concerned about his 18-year-old nephew whose parents “[did not] want him to go to school.” He worried that when the boy’s parents died he would “be in a bad way,” unable to find work without basic literacy skills. Jimmy Cisco offered similar counseling when one of his nephews considered quitting his carpenter training in Vancouver in order to go to Alaska. He told his nephew “not to be a fool” but to “stick to [his] studies and [...] get [his] papers” and then he would be able to make \$2.50/hr (a good wage in 1954).²⁸ Walter Douse’s²⁹ desire to see his children

²⁴ Ibid., Box 22 File 4 Kitamaat Mission Business.

²⁵ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

²⁶ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

²⁷ Ibid., Box 24 File 6 Lytton Attitudes to Work.

²⁸ Ibid., Box 24 File 6 Lytton Attitudes to Work.

²⁹ The spelling of Walter’s last name is uncertain. The researcher’s handwriting alternatively looks like “Danes,” “Daise” or “Douse.” However, in *Tribal Boundaries in the*

educated was motivated at least in part by his dealings with unscrupulous businessmen. Realizing that he could not rely on anyone but himself for protection in such dealings, he decided the best way his children could “protect themselves” was “to get educated.”³⁰

And there is abundant evidence that the stress on education was making an impression among younger people, many of whom had plans to continue their schooling and training in pursuit of various jobs. Frankie Rollick was considering attending college after finishing school to pursue engineering and he was by no means the only one.³¹ Eighteen year-old Gettes Wilson was eager to begin working in Butedale, a more exciting place than Kitamaat in the summer, before starting a nine-month course in diesel engineering at Vancouver Vocational the following year. The school promised to find employment for its students so he would see what sort of work would be available through the school and if there were no good opportunities he could “return home and get a job on a seine boat as engineer.” Four other boys from Wilson’s residential school were also planning to attend Vancouver Vocational the following year with the room and board arranged and paid by the Indian Department.³² Mary McKenzie’s daughter Pearl was interested in taking a commercial course so she spoke to the principal and agent, who managed to arrange a spot for her in Rupert. Even younger children were committed to their educational pursuits, if only to please their elders. Beatrice Wright felt the pressure of

Nass Watershed, there is a reference to a Walter Douse, vice-president of the Kitwancool, in 1956 and since there is mention of Walter serving as chief in Hawthorn’s fieldnotes, it is likely the same person. As a result, “Douse” will be used as the correct spelling throughout. Ibid., Box 20 File 14 Hazelton Leadership; Neil J. Sterritt et al., *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 279, fn 112.

³⁰ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

³¹ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

³² Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment; Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

her grannie's wishes so even though she did not like her boarding school in Edmonton, she kept attending because her grannie wanted her to finish school and become a nurse.³³

One exception to this common stress on education was the perceived need, or lack thereof, to educate girls, mostly seen in Kitamaat. Kay Starr, considered to be "a bright girl," completed grade 8 but her "ultra-conservative" mother said "school would do Kay no good" and would not let her go. Instead, Starr had to remain at home until she got married. According to Starr, nearly everyone in Kitamaat "[thought] that school '[was] silly' for girls" since they "just [got] married anyway." At least some of this bias was based on the village's perception of one young woman. Freda Maitland finished grade 9 at Alberni High School but after returning to the village she reportedly "ran around, got drunk, and had to get married." As a result, some parents considered Maitland proof that higher education was no good for girls. In addition to such examples, most parents attended the local residential school and remembered cooking and washing, which they said their daughters could learn at home. But there was at least one example of a young woman who persevered. Pat Robinson's father had been "against her going to school, but she went anyway, paying her own way." Her father eventually came around and offered to help her but because he had been against it Pat was "determined to go right the way through" on her own and become a nurse.³⁴ And not all parents were so resistant to having their daughters educated. Willie Dick, a section man on the C.P.R. in Lytton, was insistent about educating his children and wanted his daughters to have clerical or nurse's training.³⁵

³³ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

³⁴ Ibid., Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

³⁵ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

Despite such examples of determination, people were often unable to reach their educational goals because the means available to them were limited or insufficient. Complaints about schooling often revolved around poor teachers and substandard facilities, which characterized many Indian residential and day schools. In Kitamaat, school attendance had improved since Alcan opened but the community was facing a number of problems with school facilities. The lighting plant had broken down and although Jim McLeod, the teacher, was responsible for it, he said he had neither the authority nor money to purchase parts or hire repairmen.³⁶ The other complaint at Kitamaat was the teachers, which Tim Starr claimed, “[were] no good, and seldom ever were” partly because “they [got] paid less then [sic] teachers who work in white communities or areas off reserves.”³⁷ Tim’s daughter, Pearl Starr, and Louise Robinson had first-hand experience with this. The girls had been taking grade nine correspondence courses and although they attended school and did their lessons the teacher paid them little attention. Eventually they received notice that they were behind in their lessons and would not be able to finish until the end of July. Both girls wanted to work during the summer so they quit school. Pearl had confided to Kay Williams that “she found it much harder then [sic] she thought it would be, and when she got no help [...] she got discouraged and quit.”³⁸ Similar concerns were voiced in Hazelton. Charles Patsey criticized the “good for nothing” teachers he had in school. The kids who learned fast did alright, he said, but those who needed help, like him, did not get any at all. The teacher was only concerned with making herself look good so she had the

³⁶ Ibid., Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education. McLeod was forced to pay \$100-\$150 from his own salary for the lighting plant with no help from the village. He was led to believe by one villager that the Natives were “conducting a program of passive resistance in order to get the schools under the provincial department of education” at the urging of the Native Brotherhood.

³⁷ Ibid., Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

³⁸ Ibid., Box 22 File 8 Kitamaat Mission Education.

students memorize a page so they would be able to read it well when the inspector came. The result was that Patsey did not learn anything in his ten years of schooling and had to learn carpentry from his father and other carpenters he came across.³⁹

A more common problem was accessing schools for further training. Charlie Alphonse wanted Anaham children to take advantage of the mechanic's school in Kamloops but this was not always possible because there were too many students in the school. As a result, the students received practical training only one day each week. It was "better than nothing," Alphonse said, "but [it was] still not good."⁴⁰ Students in Hazelton were also left with limited choices for further training. Mary McKenzie and her children liked the local school in Hazelton but they encountered problems once the children reached grade 12 and had to take some courses by correspondence. Pearl McKenzie had inquired with the Agent if she could be transferred to another high school that had teachers for all the courses but the Department refused to send a student to another school when there was one available locally.⁴¹ Adding to this problem was the knowledge that post-secondary training would probably take young people off reserve permanently. George Charlie wanted his children to have "as much education as possible" and hopefully learn a trade. But he also knew that would likely mean they "would have to move from [the reserve] because there [were] no opportunities [there] – just a little labour." Willie Dick was facing a similar prospect. He wanted his children to finish school and learn a trade but not only

³⁹ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Box 15 File 29 Anaham Education.

⁴¹ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

would they have to go to Calgary or Vancouver for trade school, they would also “have to go to the city to get jobs.”⁴²

Financial concerns were also a major concern for the Aboriginal people interviewed as part of the Hawthorn study. This was especially the case if students were living away from home. Despite George Charlie’s determination to get his children educated he was unsure how much schooling he would be able to provide because of the cost. They would “[j]ust have to wait and see,” he concluded.⁴³ Solomon Goot faced the same worries in Hazelton but was determined to overcome them. He spoke to the Agent about registering his two daughters in high school but was told there was no room. He had heard that the Department could not afford to keep children in high schools but did not want financial considerations to impede his children’s education and was adamant that if the Department could not afford it, he would “[s]end money to [his children] to keep them going.”⁴⁴

While the desire to secure steady employment was not articulated as commonly as the commitment to education, it was much more common than the comments noted in Kitamaat would lead one to believe. In Lytton a number of men preferred steady work and often looked to the C.P.R. to find it. Willie Dick had been working as a section man on the C.P.R. for four years at the time of the interview and although he went hop picking during his vacations, he wanted to keep the railroad job because he liked steady employment and income.⁴⁵ Others were not as fortunate as Dick and were still searching for permanent work

⁴² Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

⁴³ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Box 20 File 7 Hazelton Education.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Box 24 File 12 Lytton Employment. Dick explained that he could make \$20-\$30/day hop picking if it was a good crop but he was able to bring only a portion of that

when they were interviewed. Eileen Quinn's husband Peter had tried to find a regular job but had not been able to. They spent their summers picking berries, potatoes and apples but could not secure work during the winter.⁴⁶ Sarah Johnny's husband worked for the Highway Construction Company, doing a variety of jobs. He liked the work and wished it were permanent because he wanted steady work.⁴⁷ Francis Michell, a young man in his early 20s, was in a similar position. He was working on the CNR patrolling at the time of the interview but the work was temporary and he was hoping an opportunity for a steady job would come up. He did not like "get[ting] bumped around from here to there" and wanted to have weekends off rather than random days of the week but he was not sure if any other positions would become available. He had also done some logging and worked for the CPR previously and said railroad work was alright but all he was "interested in [was] a steady job and steady pay."⁴⁸

In other cases, steady work meant establishing self-sustaining ranches and a number of men were trying to move from railway work to ranching. Alfred Munroe had mapped out his future carefully with the intention of slowly transitioning from his railway job into ranching. He bought 30 acres of land about 7 miles from Lytton and was in the process of building a house on it. The relocation would allow him to be closer to work and to raise cattle and hay and keep chickens. He planned to keep his railroad job while he started ranching and if he could "make a go" of the ranch he would quit railroad work.⁴⁹ Nathan Spinks also wished to make the transition from railroad work to ranching. Spinks was

income home after purchasing groceries, clothing and other necessities. This would have contributed to the appeal of steady railroad work.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Box 24 File 12 Lytton Employment.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Box 24 File 11 Lytton Education.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Box 24 File 5 Lytton Agriculture.

patrolling on the railroad, a job he liked and preferred to being a section man, but he did not want to be “a railroad man all [his] life.” If he was able to “get ahead” he planned to buy a ranch so he could raise hay, tend cattle and grow a little garden.⁵⁰ Mike Brown, the chief of the Lytton Band at the time of the interview, was aiming to make a similar transition. He had purchased a 60-acre ranch on Alkali Flat several years before and “[was] trying to make it self sufficient [sic]” but was running into troubles. The previous year he had cleared only \$1400 so he had to find summer work as section man on the railroad to supplement his income. This meant that during the summer he had “to arise early, do his farm chores before going to work on the railroad” and then complete other farm chores after work.⁵¹

In Hazelton, steady work was most often found with logging outfits. Walter Douse and his son-in-law provided steady work for some of the local men at the mill they had purchased. They had nine men working for them, cutting poles, and said it was “pretty good work [...] steady anyhow” and meant “better money [...] than milling.”⁵² In previous times everyone would have gone fishing and, indeed, roughly half the village had gone to work in canneries in the summer of 1954, but many also stayed in Hazelton to work for logging outfits. Fishing had become an expensive and competitive venture with fewer people able to make a profit while logging became a more dependable source of employment.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., Box 24 File 6 Lytton Attitudes to Work.

⁵¹ Ibid., Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

⁵² Ibid., Box 20 File 3 Hazelton Business.

⁵³ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

Kitamaat presented a different picture. Though possibilities for steady employment were greater in Kitamaat than any of the other communities because of the Alcan project, fishing often pulled men away from their Alcan jobs and other construction work. In some cases, men reported that they were not committed to these jobs because they doubted whether there were real possibilities for advancement within the Alcan hierarchy. According to the researchers, Peter Pineo and Michael Ames, when the project first started “the men grumbled that they would get only labouring jobs” and they did because “that is all they were fitted for” but the company’s seniority system would see them “advance up to good jobs if they stuck to [them].”⁵⁴ Some, like Chester Maitland, did believe that if an employee committed to his position at Alcan he could “work himself up to a better job.” Sol Green, however, had worked for Alcan for over 12 months intermittently and concluded that even “if a person worked over there steady, there would be no promotions to better jobs.” Instead, “[h]e would be doing the same kind of jobs [in] 10 years.”⁵⁵

The other, perhaps more influential factor, pulling men to go fishing was the pressure to see a return on their fishing equipment and the possibility of significant earnings

⁵⁴ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work. There was a great deal of speculation in Kitamaat about employment opportunities for Aboriginal men at Alcan but with little mention of racism. In some cases, lack of promotions was attributed to low levels of education. At other times, suspicions of unfair wages were countered with explanations that White men got paid more than Aboriginal men for doing specific, presumably more difficult, jobs. On the other hand, some men speculated that they were hired for some of the dirtiest jobs because they were Native. There was also the suggestion that the company discriminated against older men in favour of younger ones. But the most recognized form of discrimination was against locals, simply because Alcan had a monopoly on local labour and locals needed less incentive than men brought up from Vancouver so they were paid less. Of course, education, age, location or the type of work done was not openly discrimination along racial lines but it does give pause when one considers that each of these criteria worked primarily against Aboriginal employees. Ibid., Box 22, File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work; Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

during the fishing season. Gordon Robinson, who had played an important role in negotiations with Alcan, explained that some of the men in the village had a “heavy investment in fishing gear and they want[ed] to realize on that at least enough to cover depreciation.”⁵⁶ Tom Robinson was one of the gillnetters who had been making payments for well over a year on his nets and was hoping “to make the needed killing [that] year.”⁵⁷ For others, especially men burdened by heavy debt, a “bonanza year” could mean financial freedom. Dickson Grant had worked as a labourer at Alcan for two years before being promoted to electrician’s helper but decided to go fishing because “they [were] making good money out there.”⁵⁸ The possibility of “making good money” was a common incentive for fishermen: the “belief that this year *just might* be a good season, and he *just might* make a killing,” outweighed the security of more modest salaries offered by Alcan.⁵⁹

Many of the negative views expressed by supervisors at Alcan towards their Aboriginal employees were undoubtedly rooted in such instances of men abandoning their jobs in favour of fishing. One explanation that would likely be offered for such behaviour is that “[t]raditional attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns create[d] a positive preference for working in seasonal primary industries and a positive dislike for most types of regular employment.”⁶⁰ But when one considers that many Aboriginal people expressed a desire for steady employment and that they forfeited such opportunities in order to pursue potentially lucrative economic possibilities and capitalize on previous investments, a different picture emerges. Explanations like cultural preferences for seasonal employment suddenly give way

⁵⁶ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁶⁰ Hawthorn, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 73.

to strategic financial decisions. We also cannot assume people created “moditional” economies because they found a combination of “traditional” and “modern” economic pursuits most favourable. Rather, there were very concrete push and pull factors that steered people in a particular direction, whatever their ideals might have been.

One such factor influencing Kitamaat men was the recognition that they held the upper hand vis-à-vis Alcan in at least one respect: they formed the primary source of labour. This meant that even if they quit their jobs to go fishing, work at Alcan would always be available upon their return. Henry Amos had worked 11 months for Alcan since its opening and had “always [been] allowed to quit to go fishing” and return to his job after the fishing season.⁶¹ Jim McLeod, the local teacher, offered a different perspective. He claimed that “Alcan [kept] telling the Natives that they want[ed] steady year round workers, not those who quit every summer to go fishing” but men interviewed by the researchers were confident their jobs at Alcan would be waiting for them when the fishing season finished. Some even said “Alcan [did not] mind” if they quit to pursue summer fishing or spring eulichans.⁶² Though Alcan would have undoubtedly preferred steady workers and had requested more permanent workers from the village than they got,⁶³ it is also true that, comparatively speaking, Natives formed a stable workforce. According to Art Grant, Natives were steady employees compared to the general workman, who was “a sixty

⁶¹ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁶² Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work.

⁶³ Alcan had wanted 200 permanent labourers and asked Gordon Robinson to for a list of men looking for steady employment. Robinson called a meeting and presented the offer to the men in the village. 15 men wanted permanent work and another 20 - 30 were interested in temporary employment until the fishing season started. Alcan had been expecting 50 permanent workers and was disappointed with the results. In the end they hired the 30 fishermen. This is likely why so many men believed Alcan did not mind hiring and re-hiring fishermen. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

day wonder,” staying only long enough to fulfill minimum contract requirements before quitting.⁶⁴ Gordon Robinson explained that a verbal agreement had been made with Alcan that Kitamaat men would be given preference for employment. Robinson was not concerned about Alcan honouring the oral agreement because it was “to their own advantage to hire men from the village, because men from the village exhibit[ed] a greater stability on the job than general workmen brought up from Vancouver.”⁶⁵

Links to Alcan may have been tenuous when fishing was a viable option but for those who did not have adequate boats and equipment, Alcan represented a welcome source of income. In fact, having Alcan as an alternative to fishing resulted in some men letting their boats go into disrepair. Those who did not have adequate equipment or considered themselves too old for fishing were least likely to quit their jobs at Alcan during fishing season. As a result, many men “got careless with their boats” after Alcan opened and provided an alternative source of employment, which made it difficult at times to staff boats. Johnston Grant had been able to hire only 17 gillnetters for the 1954 season because “[that was] the best [he] could get.” The men had not kept up with equipment repairs and maintenance and could not go fishing even when opportunities presented themselves.⁶⁶ According to Henry Amos half the men employed at Alcan regularly quit their jobs during fishing season and many others would have as well if they had been able to access boats. Profitability was another factor that kept men at their Alcan jobs. There was “[n]ot very

⁶⁴ Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment. There was little reason to believe the high turnover rates at Alcan – 100% every three months – would change in the near future. Homes being constructed at the townsite were going to be sold for about \$20,000, making them quite exclusive and beyond the reach of a typical Alcan employee. This ensured the local population would remain transient. Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

much' money [to be made] in halibut" which is why it attracted fewer men after Alcan opened and only one fisherman bothered to participate in the halibut fishery in 1954. Fall fishing had also attracted fewer men after Alcan opened though sockeye season still remained popular.⁶⁷

Though most men chose to participate in both fishing and Alcan work, there were others who wanted to commit to one or the other. Paul Price worked as longshoreman for Alcan and had chosen the job over construction because Alcan could provide more permanent employment.⁶⁸ The job was given to men looking for steady, year-round employment, which, for Price, made the job better than any alternative and he considered himself lucky to get it. He had tried fishing in the past but was glad to have a steady income and long term prospects for the job looked good, especially since Alcan had promised that consistent employees would be promoted to better jobs.⁶⁹ Likewise, Chester Maitland, who had done various jobs for Alcan over the previous two years, was sure that "by working steady he [would] eventually get better and better jobs."⁷⁰ Other Kitamaat men looked to the fishing or logging industries for steady work. Harry Amos, for example, was fully dependent on fishing for his income. He was fortunate to work as a crewmember on a herring boat and "intend[ed] to fish for a living as long as he [could] hold that job."⁷¹ Walter Nyce also had no interest in working for Alcan. He had been logging for years and

⁶⁷ Ibid., Box 22 File 9 Kitamaat Mission Employment.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Box 22 File 3 Kitamaat Mission Attitudes to Work.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁷¹ Butedale sent out only two herring boats each year so securing a spot on one of them was not an easy task. Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

was satisfied with his job. As head boom man for a 40-man logging outfit he could clear \$2,000 for seven months of work.⁷²

Although a number of men were able to find steady work, it was often a challenge, at least in part because of the dependence on work in primary industries. This tendency was noted in the final report that Hawthorn authored, which stated that “fishing, logging and sawmilling, trapping, and certain types of farming and farm labour, with the addition of casual work (mostly in fruit- and hop-picking, logging and sawmilling and, to a lesser extent, construction work), alone account for more than 87 per cent of all primary employment and 94 per cent of all supplementary employment.”⁷³ This reliance was problematic because these industries were notorious for their fluctuations and instability. The success of a fishing season, for example, could be influenced by a number of factors: runs varied from season to season as did fishing boundaries and seasonal opening and closing dates, which were determined by fisheries agents. Fishermen and their equipment were vulnerable to accidents that could easily cost them thousands of dollars and considerable capital investment was required each season and could end up limiting the fisherman – specific boats and nets were needed for specific fish so any one boat would likely restrict a fisherman to only one kind of fish. Also, more lucrative types of fishing required larger, more expensive boats and therefore constituted more of a gamble, especially because of competition with large companies. Logging was likewise fraught with uncertainties: since lumber is an exhaustible resource, any one logging enterprise was limited to a certain number of years and since it was very physical work any kind of injury or illness could leave a man unemployable and destitute. Environmental factors such as poor weather could also

⁷² Ibid., Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

⁷³ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 72.

shorten a logging season and a strike in any sector could wreak havoc on the welfare of its workers.

Lutz also identified this problem, observing that “[f]ishing, farming, sealing and gardening were all seasonal work, and sawmill and longshoring work was volatile, depending as it did on the business cycle.”⁷⁴ And Knight added that “work skills were learned and then became obsolescent” as technological changes took hold and the growth in contract labour “shifted much of the cost and organizational problems on to the workers themselves.”⁷⁵ In this respect, the working conditions and habits of Indians were not much different than those of Euro-Canadian working class labourers: instability was a characteristic of these employment sectors, rather than the employees themselves. Knight argued that the “continuation of unique Indian work patterns” was “exaggerated by comparing them to middle-class stereotypes, rather than to the actual behaviour of non-Indian workers in the same industries at the time.”⁷⁶

Primary work was also unforgiving of physical handicaps. Ernest Harris, a Hazelton man, had to give up fishing, as well as other physical forms of labour, after losing his leg in a mill accident, thus eliminating a substantial source of income.⁷⁷ Johnny Smith, another Hazelton man, gave his lumber limit to his son to work after he had one leg amputated, which left him dependent on the Old Age Pension.⁷⁸ Chell Johnny could not work because

⁷⁴ John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 97.

⁷⁵ Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books Ltd., 1996), 125.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁷ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 20 File 3 Hazelton Business; Box 20 File 11 Hazelton Health.

of rheumatism so he got money from Agent Christie and that was only enough to cover food. Fortunately his son was a “good boy,” well liked by the ranchers because of his work ethic, and took care of Johnny.⁷⁹

Some problems, however, were unique to Aboriginal people and the most common one was lack of capital. The Indian Act of 1876 defined Indians as minors which, among other consequences, severely limited economic opportunities available to Aboriginal people. Since reserve land was held in trust by the Crown and Aboriginal people did not have legal ownership, they could not mortgage their land in order to access capital. This, in turn, restricted their acquisition of farming and logging equipment, fishing boats and nets or additional land and stock. In short, the “lack of borrowing power disadvantaged Aboriginal People in every enterprise that required capital investment.”⁸⁰ Yet, Indians invested much of their incomes in acquiring the capital necessary to participate in the various industries, thought it often left them in perilous economic circumstances. In fact, Hawthorn explained that “Indian investment in income-earning capital [was], proportionate to their incomes, perhaps larger than that of Whites.” Since Aboriginal people did not spend much on miscellaneous consumer goods, many were “able to accumulate capital on a low level of personal income.” Unfortunately, the heavy investments in equipment, required from fishermen, loggers and trappers “often [left] a very slim margin for personal needs.”⁸¹ Recognizing this problem, the DIA made bank loans available to reserve residents through the agencies. Aboriginal people, however, were often thwarted in their attempts to access Department loans. Nobody at Kitwancool (Hazelton) was able to secure a loan, according

⁷⁹ Ibid., Box 15 File 24 Anaham Attitudes to Work.

⁸⁰ Lutz, *Makúk*, 236-237.

⁸¹ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 189.

to Walter Douse, who had personally been turned down three times. In each case, he had been told by the Superintendent to go to the bank instead where Douse was, in fact, able to secure a loan. Because of the consistent rejection, however, he said he would be ashamed to ask the Superintendent for a loan again.⁸²

The effects of this were felt keenly through all industries but perhaps most of all in fishing, which required large expenditures for boats and nets. According to Douse, renting a gill-netter for two months cost \$260 and a sockeye net could cost up to \$700, which meant that a fisherman had to earn \$1000 in two months just to pay for his equipment, and of course more for living expenses.⁸³ The problem of rising costs was compounded for fishermen by the lack of credit available to them. Hawthorn explained many Indian fishermen were “facing difficulty getting credit for their day-to-day needs, let alone their capital requirements.” In some areas, Aboriginal fishermen were denied credit altogether, due to “their already heavy indebtedness and poor earning prospects, [meaning] hundreds were left destitute during the winter of 1954-5.”⁸⁴ Loggers and trappers also felt the effects. Being responsible for their own equipment meant that any mechanical glitch resulted in lost income. When Joe Elkins was interviewed at Anaham he was in the process of building a dam and ditch for Dan Lee and planned to cut wood with his chain saw once that was finished. He had once cut 400 cords at \$12/cord but such success depended, at least in part, on his saw, which, Elkins said, sometimes worked well and other times it did not and then “you lose.”⁸⁵

⁸² Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 20 File 1 Hazelton Agents.

⁸³ Ibid., Box 20 File 8 Hazelton Employment.

⁸⁴ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 118.

⁸⁵ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 30 Anaham Employment.

As capital expenses were rising, fur prices were falling, leaving trappers in a particularly disadvantaged position. Lutz noted that “[i]n 1870, one could outfit a fall hunt for twenty-five dollars, but by 1950, this had risen to ninety-six dollars, about half of which went to gasoline and kerosene. Moreover, to compete with white trappers, an outboard motor was required, and this involved an investment of \$560 in 1940 and substantially more by 1950.”⁸⁶ While trappers watched their expenses increase, they also saw their earnings decrease. Lutz explained that “[a]fter the war, the fur industry went into a steep decline” and “total incomes and employment” followed suit. In the decade between 1945 and 1955, “the real value of furs trapped in British Columbia had fallen by a catastrophic 92 percent.”⁸⁷ One victim of this trend was Ben McKenzie, a resident of Hazelton, who trapped until the fur prices dropped at the start of the decade and then turned to carpentering and plumbing as alternate sources of employment.⁸⁸ Other, smaller ventures were also susceptible to capital drawbacks. When the researcher came to talk to Henry Harry he was repairing his father-in-law’s shoes, though he did not have many of the proper tools. Harry explained that he often could not even repair his own shoes because he did not have the necessary tools and could not afford to buy them.⁸⁹

In addition to capital, limited land was a recurring problem, particularly in ranching communities such as Anaham. Band members found reserve land inadequate for their needs and a lack of equipment meant that even available land could not be worked. A number of young people at Anaham had land but the band did not have a heavy tractor that could break the land. Insufficient land also meant lost income because there was no

⁸⁶ Lutz, *Makúk*, 204.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 203-204.

⁸⁸ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Box 24 File 9 Lytton Community.

land to rent to neighbouring Whites.⁹⁰ And such problems were by no means isolated or accidental. Lutz has shown that “the size, soil, and location of most the land left to Indians made [agriculture] an impossible task.” Though Indian Agents often lobbied on Aboriginal farmers’ and ranchers’ behalf, the B.C. government’s “control over pre-emptions, reserve allotments, grazing, and water rights [...] curtailed the ability of Aboriginal People to move into commercial agriculture.”⁹¹

The limited land base was further strained in the post-WW II era by growing Aboriginal populations. Lutz has noted that despite the illnesses that continued to plague Aboriginal communities, a “rapid [population] growth” started in the 1950s and the effects were already being felt at the time of the Hawthorn report.⁹² Another factor contributing to the problem was observed by Hawthorn’s researchers: “subdivision of land holdings into uneconomically small units in some reserves, and in others, consolidation of individual holdings into large economical but monopolistic units” meant that fewer people could earn a steady and sufficient income from their land.⁹³

In light of the trends in fishing, logging and trapping, wage work may have seemed like the best option for decent, steady pay. Though such work, which often took the form of contract work, could provide a much-needed source of income for community members, sometimes the pay was prohibitively low. Patrick Alphonse explained that a lot of contract work was available around Anaham but it was not worthwhile. Haying was paid \$4.00/ton but the contract holder was responsible for hiring men to work for him and paying for his

⁹⁰ Ibid., Box 15 File 23 Anaham Agriculture.

⁹¹ Lutz, *Makúk*, 238.

⁹² Ibid., 196.

⁹³ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 150.

food and theirs. These expenses would drive him into the hole financially, despite the hard work, so Alphonse concluded he “[m]ight as well sit [at] home.”⁹⁴ And this was not the only such instance in Anaham. Thomas Elkins had been earning \$200/month as a truck driver but “found that he got nowhere with his salary” so he quit and resumed gardening and beef raising.⁹⁵

Apart from the perceived disdain for steady work, the accusation most often levied against Native people was indifference to their living conditions. While it may be true that Native homes were not as well built, furnished or maintained as contemporary White homes, it would be incorrect to assume that Native people did not desire modern conveniences or invest significant time and resources in their homes. The evidence presented in the Hawthorn fieldnotes makes it clear that improving housing conditions was a common concern. The fact that homes often fell short of the ideal was not due to a lack of concern or even resources per se but could be attributed to a situation not envisioned by Merton in his ends/means theory: the existence of multiple legitimate means in pursuit of a single goal that ultimately led to apathy and stasis.

This scenario was identified in the Hawthorn report with respect to agriculture: successful farmers depended on their own incomes or loans from the Revolving Fund for capital whereas those who struggled could benefit from “outright grants, through financing half the cost of machinery or equipment, building fences or barns, loans of livestock for breeding purposes, etc., out of the British Columbia Special Vote or from direct appropriations.” There was no “clear line drawn between the two groups” and the resulting

⁹⁴ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 24 Anaham Attitudes to Work.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Box 15 File 40 Anaham Religion.

effect on reserve residents was “confusing, discriminatory and demoralizing” often resulting in “dissatisfaction” and “apathy and carelessness.”⁹⁶ Much the same could be said for the housing situation on reserves: while some people relied on the agency for home improvements, others took a more independent approach and fissures between the two groups were starting to show in the 1950s.

The majority of people took it upon themselves to finance home improvements, even when it meant considerable financial difficulties over long periods of time. Alfred Munroe jumped through several financial hoops in order to build his home. He spent everything in his bank account and borrowed an additional \$1,000 from the bank to finance the purchase of a ranch and construct a house. He also owed a friend money for purchasing and transporting some building materials for him, all of which he was slowly paying back.⁹⁷ Pat Stewart had been working as section man on the railroad for seven years with the intention of saving his money and buying a house on the reserve.⁹⁸ Amy Spike had inherited a house from her mother but “never like[d] to live in [an] old house so [she] fixed it up.”. This required her to withdraw all the money she had saved in an Ashcroft bank and her husband, Harry, did the work.⁹⁹ Lavina Brown also had a number of pending household projects. She wanted to turn her utility room into a bathroom but could not access water until a larger pipe with more pressure was installed on the reserve. Brown also

⁹⁶ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 157-158. As social welfare programs spread to reserves in the 1950s and 1960s, the effect gradually shifted from one of confusion and uncertainty to a more general demoralization and apathy as dependence on the government became the preferred means for achieving many goals. Lutz has shown that “[w]ith the closure of work opportunities and the opening of social welfare programs to Aboriginal People, the importance of the wage economy fell relative to an increasingly robust welfare economy.” Lutz, *Makúk*, 114.

⁹⁷ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 7 Lytton Business.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Box 24 File 6 Lytton Attitudes to Work.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Box 24 File 7 Lytton Business.

had a pile of wood stacked behind her house intended for a shed and the yard needed to be fenced as well. The house itself had come at no small expense: years before, Brown had worked for a woman in town who took her money to Vancouver and deposited it in a bank since there were no banks in Lytton then. She had withdrawn most of the money to pay for the house.¹⁰⁰

Some reserve residents were quite emphatic about their determination to make do without agency assistance. In Hazelton, the McKenzies were in the process of building a house at the time of fieldwork and had invested all their savings in the house. Mary McKenzie made it clear that material for the house was being purchased with their salaries and that they were receiving no help from the agent.¹⁰¹ In Kitamaat, the Nelsons were struggling to finish the inside of their home. Joe Nelson had made only \$500 on salmon the previous year but fortunately earned more from winter herring and, combined with his income from three weeks of work at Alcan, they were able to spend \$500 on home improvements. Mrs. Nelson said she “wanted the house to be all theirs” with no help from the Department.¹⁰²

Such independence was sometimes prompted by economic stimulus. Harry Amos was optimistic because the overcrowding common to many households in Kitamaat was changing following the construction of the Alcan plant. Young married couples were starting to build homes and the “[f]uture look[ed] better.” There was also evidence that building materials, such as different types of flooring, had become more available since

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Box 24 File 17 Lytton Households.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Box 20 File 12 Hazelton Households.

¹⁰² Ibid., Box 22 File 14 Kitamaat Mission Households.

Alcan began operations.¹⁰³ In many areas, however, paychecks, and therefore building materials, were harder to come by. Jeffrey Henry had witnessed the problem repeatedly in Lytton. Henry had worked on many reserve homes but said it was not steady work because many of the men he worked for did not have sufficient funds so Henry often had to stop work until his clients were able to buy the necessary material.¹⁰⁴ In some cases, people owed him wages for building, which they had been unable to pay and Henry figured he “[j]ust [had] to wait [...] until they catch up.”¹⁰⁵

Not everyone was able to “catch up,” however, and agency assistance was expected in such circumstances. In fact, agents’ abilities were sometimes judged on the number of new homes or improvements they financed. Alfred Munroe was satisfied with Agent Hett’s work in Lytton because Hett, who had only been there 4 or 5 years, had already helped build several houses in Lillooet and a couple of new houses on Lytton reserve.¹⁰⁶ One candidate for such assistance was Betty Green, who found herself unemployed after losing her dishwashing job at O.K. Café and dependent on Family Allowance, rations and money made from sewing or prostitution. She wanted to have some work done on her home but had not “got[ten] around to asking the Agent for it.”¹⁰⁷ Matilda McIntyre was also unhappy with her old house and wanted to have some improvements done on the kitchen. Her daughter wrote to the agent on her behalf and he agreed that she needed a new kitchen

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Box 24 File 6 Lytton Attitudes to Work.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Box 24 File 7 Lytton Business.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 24 File 4 Lytton Agents.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Box 20 File 12 Hazelton Households.

after inspecting it. The agent was willing to help with some material but McIntyre's sons had been too busy to make the repairs.¹⁰⁸

Agents did not always come through, however, and even Alfred Munroe had complaints. When he started work on his house the agent instructed him to buy cement, construct the framework and surrounding shell and the agency would finish the interior. However, he was only given a portion of the roof and some siding so he had to do the rest himself. This was a common problem with the agent, he said: you could see the agent to make a request and six months later you would have to remind him and explain everything again. It became a waiting game so "[t]he only way is to do it yourself." Of course, those who had no car or other property they could leverage for a loan, those in greatest need, "[could not] get anywhere [...] always stay at the bottom."¹⁰⁹

Mat Robinson also had problems with the agent. He and his family lived in Butedale but wanted to build a house in Kitamaat. In 1949 Robinson offered to pay half the cost of the house if the Department provided assistance for the other half and made the same offer every year but with no result. The Agent said he was going to talk to councilor Gordon Robinson about the house but Robinson said the agent never talked to him. This happened the previous March so Mat was planning to talk to the Agent again the next time he came to Kitamaat. Robinson was frustrated because "[o]thers [got] their houses built,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Box 24 File 17 Lytton Households.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Box 24 File 17 Lytton Households. Part of this negligence could be explained by the "heavy load" DIA personnel had to bear. Hawthorn noted the number of comments made by superintendents "that they [were] overworked, that their agencies [were] too large, that their time [was] taken up with so many duties and calls that they [did] not have the opportunity to reflect upon the broad issues," Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, 489. Other aspects of the Indian Agent's role in regulating life on reserves will be discussed in Chapter III.

but [his family] never seem[ed] to be able to get help” and he was “getting tired of the ‘run around.’”¹¹⁰

John Abbott understood at least one of the reasons for such discrepancies: agency assistance was for “the old and pensioners.” Since Abbott was employed, he was not expecting the agency to help him with fencing in his yard.¹¹¹ In other cases, however, agency decisions were not as clear, or at least not perceived as such. In Anaham, Joe Elkin complained that he had been petitioning the Department for a new home for some time but the agent provided no assistance, though he had provided funds for new homes to others.¹¹² There was little agreement with the way the Department distributed assistance. Gordon Robinson criticized the agency for wastefulness in its distribution of lumber for housing at Kitamaat. David Duncan had come to Robinson with plans for enlarging his house and Robinson sent the measurements to the Agent. The lumber was delivered but Duncan did not start any of the planned improvements. Robinson argued that time limits should be set so that if the lumber was not used in the set amount of time the Agent would re-allocate the supplies to another family in need.¹¹³

The researchers at Lytton argued that the “‘paternalistic’ role of the agency” was at least in part responsible for some of the attitudes expressed above. Villagers had the option of going on relief and receiving rations from the Agency, they explained, and those who did not receive assistance from the Agent, “[felt] as though they [were] being cheated out of something that [was] rightfully theirs.” In some cases, reserve residents refused to build

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Box 22 File 6 Kitamaat Mission Community.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Box 24 File 17 Lytton Households.

¹¹² Ibid., Box 15 File 35 Anaham Households.

¹¹³ Ibid., Box 22 File 1 Kitamaat Mission Agents.

houses if the Agency required them to pay half the cost and “many [felt] as though the Agency should and [would] help them, and as a result there [was] little planning for the future.”¹¹⁴ The Hirabayashi’s observation points to a scenario not addressed by Merton. Having access to parallel sources of housing improvements – personal resources and Agency aid – created a situation where two legitimate but competing means resulted in an abandonment of the very goal those means were meant to achieve, or, at the very least, a stalemate that prevented an active pursuit.

At the outset of this chapter, attention was drawn to identification by Frideres and Patterson of the goal that Aboriginal people have historically pursued most consistently and with greatest unanimity: control. The purpose of this chapter has been to add some much-needed detail to that picture with the assistance of anomie theory. By examining the goals of everyday Aboriginal people I have tried to show that they committed themselves to a variety of pursuits and in detailing these pursuits, trends have emerged that add new dimensions to Aboriginal history. Although Aboriginal people most often found themselves moving through seasonal work cycles, which has been well documented by Lutz and Knight, it was not necessarily because they valued that lifestyle above all others. Indeed, a number of people interviewed by Hawthorn’s researchers expressed a desire for steady employment, though only some were able to secure it. Similarly, we cannot assume that low educational levels or poor housing conditions indicated Aboriginal people’s carelessness or disregard for these matters. An analysis of their “*ideal* world,” as opposed to a singular focus on their “*real* world,” reveals that Aboriginal people often strove for better education and housing conditions and invested a great deal of effort and resources in these pursuits.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Box 24 File 13 Lytton Essays.

Success, however, often was not proportional to the efforts invested. To understand why this was, it is necessary to consider the “*real* world” and the socially sanctioned means that were available to Aboriginal people. When this is considered in conjunction with an analysis of goals, it is not difficult to understand why these goals often were not met. Due to factors such as education, location, and state regulation Aboriginal people were mostly confined to the primary industries and because of the nature of these industries, steady employment at any one job was unlikely. The scarcity, and sometimes poor quality, of teachers, combined with poor access to schools, especially at higher levels, greatly limited the educational opportunities available to reserve residents. Likewise, scarcity of funds and building materials made home improvements difficult and agency aid, rather than compensating for limited means, created a great deal of confusion and resentment.

In fact, this final point requires further consideration. While it should be apparent from the preceding evidence that Aboriginal people living on BC reserves in the 1950s were seriously limited in the employment, educational and housing resources available to them, these limitations cannot be held fully accountable for the failures people experienced when trying to achieve their goals. The control that the Department of Indian Affairs exercised on reserves through its Indian Agents and the way this control was executed formed a very serious obstacle to many socio-economic functions on reserves. Indeed, Durkheim identified specific aspects of the state’s role with respect to the populace it governs as leading to an anomic condition. In the following chapter, these criteria will be applied to the Aboriginal communities under review in order to isolate the dysfunctional aspects of the DIA’s role on reserves and show how it hindered the achievement of socio-economic goals.

CHAPTER III

“Fixity and Regularity”: A Critical Factor in Achieving Goals

In their final report, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*, Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson identified one of the primary obstacles preventing effective governance on Aboriginal reserves: the “simple fact” that “Indians themselves [were] not associated with day-to-day administrative decisions.” Because of this, Indians often saw agents’ and superintendents’ actions as unreasonable or high-handed, when they were, indeed, “nothing more than the superintendent’s having to correspond with Ottawa and interpret decisions that he himself did not make.”¹ Certainly, when one considers reserve residents’ experiences with agents, it is not difficult to understand why agents’ decisions often appeared to be unfounded whims. Alfred Munroe offered a prime example. When Munroe first moved to the Lytton reserve he went to see the agent and explained he was working on the railroad at Lytton and wanted to buy a plot of land and build a house on the reserve. The agent told Munroe to ask the chief for permission and when the chief agreed, Munroe had the agent draw up the papers. They agreed Munroe could stay on the land as long as he worked on the railroad and if he moved he would sell his property to a member of the Lytton band. All seemed well until the agent was replaced. The new agent seemingly reversed the policy, saying the agreement previously signed was void and told Munroe he would have to move off the land. Munroe insisted the previous agreement be honoured and hoped the agent would let him stay on the reserve.²

¹ Harry Hawthorn, Cyril Belshaw and Stuart Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 488.

² University of British Columbia Library, University Archives, Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 5 Lytton Agriculture.

Such far-reaching and apparently idiosyncratic actions of government agents were the type of behaviours critiqued by Émile Durkheim in *The Division of Labor in Society*. In the final chapters, Durkheim turned his attention to factors that could disrupt the natural development of the division of labour, creating an anomic condition. He identified three principal scenarios: over-extension of regulation, constraint, and inconsistency. Sociologists and anthropologists have often used the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity, or the development of the division of labour, as an explanatory framework for social ills found in Aboriginal communities. To reiterate: colonialism caused this development to take place too rapidly and forcefully resulting in unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcoholism. What has often been overlooked in such analyses is that Durkheim did not consider the shift from mechanical to organic societies and the corresponding division of labour detrimental to societies. He saw it as a natural progression that transformed social cohesion but did not necessarily weaken it. Solidarity was damaged only when certain factors intervened, specifically over-extension of regulation, constraint and inconsistency. When socio-economic conditions on Aboriginal reserves are analyzed with these conditions in mind, Durkheim's warnings not only prove correct, they help explain why Aboriginal people were often thwarted in achieving their goals.

According to Durkheim, the primary function of government is to repair the sense of solidarity weakened by occupational specialization. Durkheim acknowledged the damage wrought by the division of labour as outlined by Auguste Comte, who cautioned that although “the separation of social functions permits a felicitous development of the spirit of detail otherwise impossible, it spontaneously tends, on the other hand, to snuff out the spirit

of togetherness or, at least, to undermine it profoundly.”³ Comte did not conclude, however, that the dissolving influences of specialization must lead humanity back “to that state of indistinctness and homogeneity which was their point of departure.” Rather, the task of maintaining unity becomes “a special function in the social organism, represented by an independent organ,” namely the State or government. The government’s “social destiny,” says Comte, is to prevent, “as far as possible, this fatal disposition towards a fundamental dispersion of ideas, sentiments, and interests, the inevitable result of the very principle of human development.”⁴

Critical to this conception, and to understanding problems in Aboriginal communities, however, is the fact that the State cannot regulate all functions of society or force a unity where there is none. Rather, it can only *express* this solidarity. As Durkheim explained, beneath “this general, superficial life” represented by the State, the diverse organs of society continue to function, not with complete independence but without the intervention of the State, which is too remote to regulate all functions. No regulating body can adjust the multitude of functions within social life “and make them concur harmoniously if they do not concur of themselves.” Unity is brought about by “the spontaneous consensus of parts” and the “regulative action of higher centres” can only translate this internal solidarity “into another language and, so to speak, consecrate it.”⁵ The regulatory action of the DIA, however, rather than expressing the internal solidarity

³ Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor In Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1964 c1933), 357.

⁴ Ibid., 358.

⁵ The example provided by Durkheim was that the government cannot “at every instant, regulate the conditions of the different economic markets” because their “practical problems arise from a multitude of detail [...] *which only those very close to the problems know about*” [emphasis added]. Ibid., 360.

found on reserves, impeded certain functions by controlling many of the minute details that ought to have been beyond its purview.

Durkheim's warnings would have certainly resonated with residents of Anaham reserve whose suggestions for much-needed improvements to the irrigation system were repeatedly snubbed by the DIA. The reserve was situated 10 to 50 miles from the meadowlands, which was used as a cattle range and for growing hay and for vegetable gardens. Since hay was critical for the cattle ranchers and water supply limited on the reserve, the availability of creek and lake water on the meadows made the land essential. In her 1954 essay, "Mobility at Anaham Reserve," Elizabeth Lok wrote that abundant crops of alfalfa hay could be cultivated on the meadowlands if the land was sufficiently irrigated. Lok explained that some of the reserve's irrigation needs were covered by water from Anaham and Zenzaco Creeks but the supply was inadequate to quench the dry land and meet all the residents' needs. The creeks also got very low or dried up altogether in July and August further limiting the water supply.⁶ Casimir Bob was dismayed that good rancheries were suffering because of a lack of water, a situation that ensured, in Father Sutherland's words, people would live "hand-to-mouth" until the issue was addressed.⁷

The solution proposed by reserve residents was to have land around and between several nearby lakes bulldozed to bring the lakes together so the water could be dammed and spilled into Anaham Creek. This would make sufficient water available to irrigate all the land that was then lying fallow.⁸ Although the community seemed to be in agreement with

⁶ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

⁷ Ibid., Box 15 File 23 Anaham Agriculture; Box 15 File 40 Anaham Religion.

⁸ Ibid., Box 15 File 22 Anaham Agents.

regard to both the problem and solution, nothing could be done without DIA support and the DIA had different ideas. The Department wanted to divert water up from the Chilcotin River but this entailed a prohibitive \$50,000 cost.⁹ Agent Christie had an even more radical plan for the community. He wanted people at Redstone to move down to a flat piece of land where he had eight homes built around the existing church to encourage people to make the move. The band would then buy the adjoining 1000 acres and give up their current holdings. A school and an irrigation ditch could then be built in the new village, which he claimed would allow people to stay in the village year round rather than moving to different patches of land. Children would then be present for the full school year without creating problems for the parents.¹⁰ Clearly, DIA plans diverged sharply from those of local residents or were simply too expensive to be viable. Father Sutherland's explanation of the situation was succinct: band members argued water could be brought from the lakes behind the hills for half the price "[b]ut nobody listens to them."¹¹

The DIA's disregard for Aboriginal people's input backfired on two fronts: it impeded grass-roots economic initiatives on reserves and simultaneously doomed its own economic stimulus programs. Following WWII, the socio-economic inequalities visible on reserves took on new importance in Canadian society and economic development programs

⁹ Ibid., Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays.

¹⁰ Ibid., Box 15 File 22 Anaham Agents.

¹¹ Ibid., Box 15 File 40 Anaham Religion. It seems that Father Sutherland did not actively endorse Agent Christie's plan to move the village closer to the church. Instead, he seemed content with people's mobility since they made the effort to return to the village for a special church service in November. Father Sutherland even supported Joe Elkin's decision to build a house some distance from the church as long as he attended service on Sundays. Ibid., Box 15 File 31 Anaham Essays; Box 15 File 35 Anaham Households.

were heralded as the solution.¹² Byron Plant examined three of these economic initiatives in his dissertation, “The Politics of Indian Administration: A Revisionist History of Intrastate Relations in Mid-Twentieth Century British Columbia” and concluded that while they “varied in specific purpose, structure, and implementation, these programs all shared one basic characteristic: none was effective in achieving its intended goal.”¹³ Among the administrative and financial problems that plagued these programs, Plant cites “the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the decision making process” as a “significant debilitating factor.”¹⁴ The programs were not successful in leveling the economic playing field for Aboriginal people, nor did their “view of reserves as undesirable spaces of underdevelopment” represent Aboriginal concerns.¹⁵ Even as late as 1966, the Indian

¹² Byron Plant, “The Politics of Indian Administration: A Revisionist History of Intrastate Relations in Mid-Twentieth Century British Columbia” (PhD diss. University of Saskatchewan, 2009), 152-153.

¹³ Ibid., 154. The Employment Placement Program (EPP), implemented in 1957, was the “first programmatic attempt to facilitate off-reserve movement for work purposes” by finding employment for specially selected individuals in rural and urban areas. Although the program was responding to a pressing need on reserves – namely, the shortage of employment opportunities – it did not find much success because the candidates did not receive adequate services or follow-up from staff. The Community Employment Program (CEP), emerging only two years after the EPP, was mandated to increase employment opportunities on reserves. One of the CEP’s objectives was to “afford the Indian people added opportunities to acquire experience in the duties and responsibilities of self-government by involving them in the selection, planning and operation of projects.” In reality, agency superintendents proposed and coordinated work projects, leaving Aboriginal people “little power to determine or influence the CEP.” Although the CEP achieved some success in reducing relief payments on reserves as a result of its work programs Aboriginal people were “more likely to see the CEP as a discriminatory way to force menial work for welfare pittance, rather than as a way of promoting industrious work habits.” Finally, the Community Development Program (CDP), launched in 1964, was based on the premise that “Indians needed to make better use of their resources, have more initiative, and be self-sufficient.” The CDP was novel in that it did not seek to abolish reserves and that it sought out Indian participation in the form of Community Development Assistants. The program, however, did not garner much success because local initiative quickly morphed into band councils consenting to government-initiated projects. Ibid., 160-196.

¹⁴ Ibid., 203.

¹⁵ Ibid., 154.

Advisory Committee in BC found that “most Indians tended to be unaware of any economic development opportunities stemming from government policy or regulation.”¹⁶

The “exclusion of Aboriginal people from the executive and decision-making process[es]” was a common problem throughout this period.¹⁷ In particular, Plant demonstrated that the DIA’s “experimentation with economic development programming accomplished little” since the Department failed to gain the “Aboriginal consent and participation needed to effect actual change.”¹⁸ As frustrating as this was for the Department, it must have been doubly so for the people whose ability to direct their own affairs and “effect actual change” was limited by the Department’s patronizing policies. Jean-Marie Guyau addressed this problem and its consequences. He claimed the sense that one can “exercise some influence on the unknowable and its realization,” thus forming a determinable ideal, capable of realization, was a necessity in the pursuit of goals. “The idea of a moral rule [...] presupposes the belief in a possible influence of the will on it, and on its realization in the future.”¹⁹

The “exercise [of] influence” was missing in Lytton, where calls for changes to hunting and fishing regulations fell on deaf ears. Tommy Lick enumerated the problems for the researchers: Natives had to obtain a permit to shoot deer though much of the local game had been cleaned out by non-Native sports hunters. The use of shotguns also left many birds wounded but few were actually killed. In addition, fishing was prohibited at

¹⁶ Ibid., 201.

¹⁷ Ibid., 42.

¹⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹ Jean-Marie Guyau, *A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction*, trans. Gertrude Kapteyn (London: Watts & Co., 1898), 67-68.

certain times, which Alfred Munroe and his father protested, claiming that “[t]he Indian [had] to eat and should be able to fish any time.”²⁰ Controls became necessary as technological improvements, especially with regard to fishing, increased poaching and strained resources. The Department of Fisheries responded with stricter regulations, which “resulted in restrictions being placed upon the Indians’ ‘aboriginal rights’ to fish for spawning salmon in a number of areas.”²¹ The Provincial Game Commission and others with a professed interest in conservation questioned the Indians’ ability to practice restraint in their exploitation of fish and game with modern equipment.²² However, it must have chafed when officials claimed Indians would “fish the river clean” but allowed people from California to hunt and fish in the area.²³ Hawthorn recognized this contradiction and questioned the underlying motivations of these conservationists. Relying on experts who presented “more convincing evidence,” Hawthorn suggested that “regulations laid down and enforced by the Provincial Game Commission have been carried out, in part at least, in response to pressure from sportsmen’s organizations, and reflect largely the sentiments and interests of this minority.” Hawthorn was emphatic in his conclusion that such policies were “detrimental to the needs and interests of Indians and others who depend upon game for a large part of their food supply.”²⁴ As such, Hawthorn’s report lent support to Lick’s contention that Native people only caught what they used and distributed any surplus so nothing would be wasted. Even more importantly, it answered Lick’s plea to “tell the government [they] [do not] want regulations.”²⁵

²⁰ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 14 Lytton Exchange.

²¹ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 97.

²² *Ibid.*, 98.

²³ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 14 Lytton Exchange.

²⁴ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 98.

²⁵ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 24 File 14 Lytton Exchange.

The DIA rarely acknowledged such lamentations and could hardly be seen as *expressing* Aboriginal concerns. This was exacerbated by the state's excessive control of life on reserves, which formed the centerpiece of Alfred Munroe's complaints against DIA policy. Undoubtedly spurred by his housing problems, noted above, Munroe could not stomach the residency restrictions placed on Indians. He felt he "should be able to go anywhere on reserve land and buy land and build a house on it" – in other words, to have the mobility that White men have. Instead, Indians were like branded cattle, "herd[ed] ... onto one place" and not allowed to move off.²⁶ Hawthorn recognized this problem and its economic consequences. He argued that "the Indian should be in a position to follow his occupational bent, as far as possible, without losing contact with Indian communities." Otherwise, the number of "occupational misfits" resulting from lack of mobility, which Hawthorn estimated to be over 50% of Aboriginal men in BC at that time, would "possibly increase as education broaden[ed] qualifications."²⁷ Band membership was attached to conditions of residence, property and band franchise and, consequently, these conditions had "extremely important consequences in terms of mobility and outlook."²⁸ With regard to residence, the Indian Act, R.S.C. 1927, c. 98 stated "No person, or Indian other than an Indian of the band, shall without the authority of the Superintendent General, reside or hunt upon, occupy or use any land or marsh, or reside upon or occupy any road, or allowance for road, running through any reserve belonging to or occupied by such band."²⁹ This section of the Act was repealed, however, in 1951 and the replacement "[was] not specific in the matter of residence." Instead, "[t]he law in relation to residence [had] to be

²⁶ Ibid., Box 24 File 4 Lytton Agents.

²⁷ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 443.

²⁸ Ibid., 439.

²⁹ Sharon Helen Venne, *Indian Acts and Amendments 1868-1975: An Indexed Collection* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1981), 254; as quoted in Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 439.

inferred indirectly by reference to other matters.” Hawthorn astutely observed that “band membership [carried] with it no specific implications of residence under the present Act,” which he considered “an advisable position” and recommended that “superintendents and band councils should interpret the law in this way.”³⁰ It is questionable, however, whether agency officials were even aware of the change in the Indian Act. Indicative of the systemic incompetence, or at a minimum a disturbing nonchalance, Superintendents interviewed by Hawthorn’s researchers “were unanimously of the opinion that it was illegal for anyone but a band member to reside on band lands without the express sanction of the band council, supported by the superintendent.”³¹

Hawthorn’s reference to both superintendents’ *and* band councils’ role in determining band membership and residency is a necessary reminder that Aboriginal people were not completely without agency. In fact, there are impressive examples of Aboriginal control exercised with confidence and to great effect. Alcan, the aluminum company operating across the bay from Kitamaat, had made an offer to the Kitamaat Band for sale of Minette Bay Reserve #5 in January 1952. A price was agreed on and the council recommended the proposal but the band wanted to keep a portion of the land and, in May 1953, voted against two proposals that would have allowed them to retain portions of the reserve. The Band met again in May 1954 with Mr. Arneil, Indian Commissioner, and Mr. Webb, Alcan’s representative, to consider a new proposal. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Webb offered to purchase the entire reserve at the same price as before but included a lighting plant or a small bulldozer as part of the deal. The Council agreed to put the proposal before the Band at the end of the month, at which time it was again turned down.

³⁰ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 440.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 439.

Gordon Robinson and the other councillors were given credit for saving Reserve #5 since Arneil had been in favour of making the sale and likely would have, had it not been for the council's determination to keep the land.³² Hawthorn would have considered this assertion of authority an important step in "reducing paternalism in administration," which could only be achieved with the "increased association of the Indians in decision-making and executive responsibility."³³

Sometimes the barrier to greater responsibility was ineffective leadership on reserves. The chief at Anaham came under fire for not being assertive enough with the agent. But as Paul Dominic, "the captain in the [Anaham] band council," pointed out, such ineffectiveness was at least as much a factor of linguistic and cultural barriers as anything else. Indeed, Dominic attributed the chief's inhibitions to his poor grasp of English and his uneasiness around white people. Dominic, on the other hand, had the confidence to speak his mind but because he was not the chief, he did not have much sway. An effective leader, Dominic argued, was necessary to make sure "things go good."³⁴ A more troubling problem inhibiting the band council's ability to govern, however, was the convoluted nature of the council's relationship with the superintendent and the procedures it had to follow in order to put resolutions in effect. The superintendent and agency staff took charge of collecting information, signing contracts and ensuring "the band [made] no mistakes."³⁵ The subordinate position of band councils was made clear in the Indian Act, which phrased band councils' role "in terms such as 'The Minister may, with the consent of the council of

³² Harry Hawthorn fonds Box 22 File 17 Kitamaat Mission Miscellaneous; Box 22 File 10 Kitamaat Mission Essays.

³³ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 491.

³⁴ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 37 Anaham Leadership.

³⁵ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 460.

a band...” Hawthorn argued that “the appropriate phrasing, more consistent with the dignity and powers of the council, would be, ‘The council may, subject to review by the Minister...’”³⁶ Procedural complications also stymied band councils in asserting their authority. Council meetings, while attempting to satisfy standards put forth by Ottawa, often became ineffective. Documentation had to be forwarded to Ottawa and when important resolutions or by-laws were passed, minutes were not acceptable as evidence. In such cases a resolution certified by the chief and council was required and producing such a document was no easy task. The superintendent would bring a draft resolution to the meeting but in the case of complications or amendments, the changes would have to be made at the superintendent’s office, which would necessitate another visit to the council at a later date for signatures. If any steps were skipped, Ottawa would return the resolution and the council would be faced with it again, thus delaying the whole process.³⁷

Administrative expediency often circumvented council powers. Obtaining council approval on a specific piece of policy in the days before effective electronic or postal communication systems often meant that the superintendent had to travel to the reserve, not infrequently a lengthy trip, so the policy could be discussed at a council meeting. It was, therefore, in the superintendent’s interest “that the meeting proceeds quickly and efficiently and reaches conclusions to clear the agenda.” Hawthorn aptly concluded that “these considerations combine[d] to press the superintendent to exert control over the proceedings.”³⁸ Apart from policies that required council approval, the superintendent did not often initiate policy discussions with councils. This was caused in part by the

³⁶ Ibid., 451.

³⁷ Ibid., 449.

³⁸ Ibid., 454.

superintendent's "loyalty to central policies," which could be challenged by councils if such an opportunity was provided. More practical considerations also played a role, such as the short amount of time superintendents spent on reserves and the more pressing business concerns that had to be addressed at meetings.³⁹

Hawthorn easily grasped the "tremendous frustration and social claustrophobia" resulting from this arrangement. The superintendent in all likelihood meant well, "regard[ing] his close control of band council affairs as a protective duty, placed upon him by Parliament, for the benefit of the Indian." But Hawthorn presented a contrary view, challenging Canadians to consider how they would feel "if all [their] democratic institutions, while retaining full rights of decision-making, could only approach their business through the medium of an office controlled by a federal civil servant." He concluded that such a situation "would hardly be conducive to the growth of liberty and civil responsibility." Seen from this perspective, it is not surprising that problems of anomie would emerge. Key to reversing this trend, Hawthorn concluded, was enabling band councils to "discover appropriate facts and to take action to implement the decision."⁴⁰

Conducting business through civil servants was especially problematic when those servants did not perform their duties adequately. Many people were frustrated precisely because they did not feel that Agents were aware of and represented their concerns. A typical example was Agent Christie's participation in band meetings on Anaham reserve where he was described as sitting at the back of the room scribbling in his book, and then leaving after fifteen minutes or so. And even though Christie knew what they needed and

³⁹ Ibid., 455.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 460.

would sometimes say he would do something for them “at first of week,” he often did not come, leaving people waiting for him. “He fool us lots of time,” Paul Dominic observed.⁴¹ Lytton residents faced a similar problem. Hawthorn’s interviewers were told that a person could go see the agent about something that was needed only to have to return six months later to remind the agent and explain the situation all over again.⁴² Emily Abbott had spoken to the agent at Lytton about getting back pay for her husband and other workers who had not been paid by a mill owner. Typically, the agent said he would go see the mill owner about the pay but was not seen or heard from after that so Abbott figured he “[was not] going to do it or just forgot about it.”⁴³ Patrick Alphonse summed up the common sentiment on reserves when he asked, “do the government know anything about the Indian, how he live? What the Agent for?”⁴⁴

Durkheim would have likely answered that the Agent was a form of constraint, which he defined as anything “that can even indirectly shackle the free unfolding of the social force that each carries in himself.” As such, constraint was not limited to physical force but encompassed any “obstacle, of whatever nature, [that] prevents [individuals] from occupying the place in the social framework which is compatible with their faculties.” Indeed, the degree of reserve residents’ dependence on agency staff was alarming for Hawthorn. He was “astonished...that all business of a financial kind is transacted through the superintendent’s office, and that officials of the band council seldom come face to face with representatives of the groups with whom they have business.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 22 Anaham Agents.

⁴² Ibid., Box 24 File 4 Lytton Agents.

⁴³ Ibid., Box 24 File 12 Lytton Employment.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Box 15 File 22 Anaham Agents.

⁴⁵ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 458.

Regarded in this light, we can see that conducting business through this medium also fit within Durkheim's final scenario leading to an anomic situation. Durkheim argued that organic solidarity is not capable of "determining the mutual relations of functions" without regulations so that functions are predetermined "if not in every kind of meeting, at least in circumstances which most frequently occur." Otherwise, equilibrium must constantly be re-established and "solidarity would be scarcely more than potential, if mutual obligations had to be fought over entirely anew in each particular instance." Regulations ensure that functions "are identically repeated in given circumstances, since they cling to general, constant conditions of social life" and their relations "cannot fail to partake of the same degree of fixity and regularity." Because "certain ways of mutual reaction" are "very conformable to the nature of things" they "are repeated very often and become habits," which, in turn, "are transformed into rules of conduct." In this way, a "sorting of rights and duties [...] is established by usage and becomes obligatory" so that "[t]he past determines the future."⁴⁶

Policies and regulations administered by the DIA and its agents often lacked the "fixity and regularity" stressed by Durkheim and, indeed, many functions on reserves suffered as a result. DIA decisions relating to housing and education often appeared arbitrary. Joe Elkin had wanted to build a new house on Anaham reserve for some time to replace the old house he was living in and had picked a spot for it. The agent, however, had

⁴⁶ Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, 365-366. Robert Merton expressed a similar concern with predictability. He explained that "one of the most general functions of social structure is to provide a basis for predictability and regularity of social behavior." Dissociation between goals and means minimized predictability and created "anomie or cultural chaos." Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), 159-160.

not been willing to help, though he had given money to other people to build houses.⁴⁷

Alice Abbott and her classmates also felt the sting of governmental irregularities. Abbott had wanted to go to high school so she could become a nurse. The school had promised to send her and a half dozen of her classmates to high school but then, without explanation, reversed the decisions so that none of them were able to go. By the time they started sending students to high school again, a couple of years later, it was too late for Abbott.⁴⁸

Inconsistencies also permeated government pension, relief and Unemployment Insurance payments. Ernest Harris had worked for mills in Hazelton and Port Edward for years, paying his Unemployment Insurance dutifully. When his leg was severed he wrote to Rupert for help but was told that since he had not drawn for five years, he would get nothing. With bitter irony Harris concluded that there was “[n]o kindness there. I guess that’s the law [...] Some kind of law.”⁴⁹ Johnny Smith had similarly “work[ed] like a son of a dog” for years, paying thousands of dollars in income tax and yet he was receiving only \$40 in pension while others, who were not as sick as he, were collecting as much as \$50 or \$60.⁵⁰ Even more telling than disappointment in the system were the cries for information and explanation. Like Johnny Smith, Rose Skuki and her husband were receiving smaller pensions than other reserve residents but Skuki did not appear indignant so much as baffled – she did not know *why* the pension amounts differed.⁵¹ Ethel Grant also questioned *why* people in Kitamaat were not given relief and had to pay for doctors while people in Alberni received help from the Agent.⁵²

⁴⁷ Harry Hawthorn fonds, Box 15 File 35 Anaham Households.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 24 File 16 Lytton Health.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Box 20 File 2 Hazelton Attitudes to Work.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Box 20 File 1 Hazelton Agents.

⁵¹ Ibid., Box 24 File 17 Lytton Households.

⁵² Ibid., Box 22 File 1 Kitamaat Mission Agents.

Indian fishermen could also point to a glaring example of government inconsistency. Following WWII, Indian commercial fishermen were subjected to taxation, a departure from previous policy, which exempted Indians living on reserves from the federal income tax. The final decision was reached in 1953 but taxes were collected retrospectively for the years that the policy had been in dispute. Hawthorn was “amazed at the disregard for economic consequences with which the law was administered.” Fishermen received bills that amounted to more than their earnings in 1953, resulting in “widespread garnisheeing and laying up of Indian fishing boats, and an extremely onerous debt.” Yet, while fishermen on the coast struggled to meet these massive debts with their already-precarious incomes, Indian farmers and ranchers living on reserves remained exempt from income tax. Hawthorn saw “no logical reason” why “one type of Indian industry should be subsidized but not another.”⁵³

The nature of government policies and the avenues of communication in place between the state and reserves contributed to the perception of government irregularity. Hawthorn commented on the gap between policy and execution. Just because something was or appeared to be clear at the policy level did not mean it translated accurately among the populace. Superintendents likely believed that the regulations they were administering were understood among reserve residents. However, explaining policies or administrative procedures to councillors or others prominent residents on reserves did not ensure accurate and widespread communication across the reserve. Hawthorn recommended a more official form of communication suggesting superintendents “describe policy on paper,

⁵³ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 480.

circulating at least all councillors, in simple non-technical language.”⁵⁴ It is hardly surprising that policies were not well understood among reserve residents considering that administration of these policies was not always carried out as intended. Plant has aptly demonstrated in his dissertation that “state-directed integrationist measures rarely produced the results envisioned by their architects.”⁵⁵ As was mentioned above, superintendents did not appear aware of the changes to reserve residency regulations in the revised Indian Act. There was a similar discrepancy between the procedure outlined in the Indian Act (S.C. 1951, c. 29) for passing by-laws, which stated that “no such by-law is invalid by reason of any defect in form” and the actual expectations of the DIA which was known to return by-laws if they were submitted in an unacceptable form.⁵⁶

Indeed, Hawthorn’s study was perfectly positioned to evaluate the degree to which amendments made to the Indian Act in 1951 were actually noticed on reserves in the years immediately following. The 1951 revisions were significant in their demonstration of changing attitudes in Canada following WWII but the concrete results were considerably less impressive. The process of amending the Act began with the creation of a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons in 1946. The Committee was charged with examining the 1927 Indian Act, investigating potential amendments and making recommendations. From 1946 to 1948 the Committee “heard testimony from numerous government officials, representatives of Indian associations and other interested parties.” In

⁵⁴ Ibid., 491.

⁵⁵ Plant, “The Politics of Indian Administration,” 28.

⁵⁶ Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, *Contemporary Indian Legislation, 1951-1978* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1984), 30; as quoted in Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 449.

fact, these hearings “marked the first systemic effort by Government to consult with Indians.”⁵⁷

Many of the submissions made by representatives of Indian organizations reflected the concerns identified by Durkheim and noted above. Speaking on behalf of the North American Indian Brotherhood, Andrew Paull suggested that the “Department’s power to admit and remove band members be curtailed,” a request echoed by the Indian Association of Alberta. The Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts also questioned the power and role of the DIA, but from a different perspective. They demanded a representative of Indian affairs who was not linked to any other office. This, they claimed, would ensure they were notified of amendments before they were passed in the House. The Indian Association of Alberta identified another problem regarding representation: the conflict of interest created by requiring the Superintendent-General to represent Indian concerns while acting on behalf of the Crown. In this situation, the Superintendent “found it impossible to advance the interests of both parties at the same time” and, inevitably, the interests of the Crown were favoured, “it being the stronger, more vocal and the more affluent of the two parties.” But the most poignant statement came from John Calihoo, President of the Indian Association of Alberta, who hit the proverbial nail on the head when he argued that “the new Act must place more and more responsibility upon our chiefs and councils to act as governing bodies. For example, the great and arbitrary powers of the superintendent-general must be limited and more opportunity for appeal from such

⁵⁷ Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *The Historical Development of the Indian Act* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Treaties and Historical Research, 1978), 132-134.

decisions provided.”” Andrew Paull likewise recommended that “band councils [...] be empowered to manage local matters.”⁵⁸

The House passed Bill 79, amending the Indian Act, on May 17, 1951. In key aspects – provisions for local government, ending Indian status and protecting Indian lands – the Act remained unchanged. One significant modification was the overall limitation placed on the powers of the Superintendent-General and the Minister, and the granting of “greater autonomy” to Bands. Despite these changes, which indicated that the Committee had integrated the suggestions made by Indian representatives, the powers of officials in Ottawa “remained formidable” along with a lingering and “widespread feeling” throughout the 1950s that “the Act itself was the source of all [...] [Indian] frustration.” As George Manuel explains it, “although we were living under the new Act of 1951, we were still too close in our minds to the old Act, which had included so many restrictions.” It also became apparent as reserves began to develop that “the Act was written in such general terms that it could be interpreted either in ways that would be oppressive or in ways that would be supportive.” As a result, the National Indian Advisory Council examined the Act clause by clause and debated ideas “for making the Act more workable, for ridding it of the ambiguities that had been put into the 1951 version, and for making it clear that it should be interpreted as supportive legislation.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid., 134-138.

⁵⁹ George Manuel, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974), 164-165. In contrast to members of INAC and the people they represented who considered the Act an integral part of their legal identity as Indians and wished to make it workable, Manuel notes that Indian Affairs employees often blamed the “the Act *itself* for the lack of development on reserves and for the control it held over Indian lives” (emphasis added).

So much for Durkheim's "fixity and regularity." While amendments in the new Indian Act took steps to scale back the excessive government regulation of Indian reserves, they failed on another front by creating space for greater inconsistencies through ambiguity. These failings, however, cannot be attributed entirely to the Indian Act and its authors. It must also be considered that the Department of Indian Affairs was assigned an impossible task that no set of laws could alleviate. In addition to the awkward situation created by the Department of Indian Affairs' attempts to implement federal policies for its Indian wards *while* representing their concerns, it must also be remembered that "regional differences in Indian conditions impaired effective [...] implementation of policy and legislation." Even if the DIA had devised an effective method for carrying out its mammoth task, it would have been prevented from doing so because of insufficient funding. As Hawthorn put it, "there is no cheap way of administering well the affairs of 30,000 people spread over 370,000 square miles."⁶⁰ Although the DIA's budget grew from six million to over thirty-six million dollars between 1940 and 1959, this did not necessarily result in more resources being available to Aboriginal people. Instead, the growth was a product of the post-WWII government boom, which saw Department staff double in number as part of a broader trend that enabled "new forms of governmental intervention in Canadian life."⁶¹

Whether it was because of the lack of funding, the short amount of time that had passed since the Indian Act was amended or further proof of the DIA's incompetence, the "greater autonomy" promised Bands in the revised Indian Act was not very evident on the reserves studied by Hawthorn's researchers. Apart from the concerted and determined steps taken by the Kitamaat Band Council to protect their reserve land, the DIA continued its

⁶⁰ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia*, viii.

⁶¹ Plant, "The Politics of Indian Administration," 23-24.

extensive regulation of reserve life, determining where people could live, which economic projects would be funded and what issues band councils would address. At the same time, the DIA continued to ignore input from Aboriginal people, even when it was stated confidently and repeatedly. And although the revised Indian Act attempted to resolve discrepancies found in earlier versions and simplify its administration, glaring inconsistencies remained in the way policies were executed. All of these factors combined to create frustration and uncertainty on reserves that prevented the successful pursuit of goals, possibly to a greater extent than limited means.

CONCLUSION

Re-thinking Anomie and Aboriginal History

In *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*, James Frideres described the transformation that Aboriginal organizations underwent in the mid-1950s, shifting from a focus on specific locations or issues to more “multifaceted” concerns.¹ The central aim of these groups was the push for self-government and increased control over Aboriginal affairs.² E. Palmer Patterson likewise cited control as one of the “general aims” of Aboriginal people, in addition to “educational equality with the Whites.”³ There is no doubt that self-government and increased control have been central to Aboriginal people’s demands for many decades, and with good reason. But overlooking other, more specific aims limits our understanding of Aboriginal history. In the preceding chapters I have attempted to demonstrate how some of the principles found within Robert Merton and Émile Durkheim’s anomie theories can be applied to the study of Aboriginal history in order to uncover trends and perspectives previously neglected.

Focusing my analysis on the fieldnotes collected for Harry Hawthorn’s study, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*, provides several advantages. The fieldwork was conducted on reserves and researchers depended on and recorded information provided by community members, thus offering a rare glimpse into the lives of ordinary Aboriginal men and women, as opposed to prominent leaders or

¹ James S. Frideres, *Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1983), 233. Frideres was referencing E. Palmer Patterson, *The Canadian Indians: A History Since 1500* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-MacMillan Canada Ltd., 1972).

² *Ibid.*, 293.

³ E. Palmer Patterson, “Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence” (PhD diss. University of Washington, 1962), xiii.

organizations. The time period covered is also significant, particularly for Aboriginal labour history. Rolf Knight's pioneering work, *Indians at Work*, examined Indian labour from the mid-nineteenth century to 1930. John Lutz's *Makúk* stretched into the 1970s but much of the work was devoted to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries with a fairly brief overview of developments in the post-WWII era. The detailed focus on the mid-1950s found in the fieldnotes and the final Hawthorn report fills in some of the historical gaps.

Combining Hawthorn's fieldnotes with Merton's goals/means theory also complements the analysis offered in *The Indians of British Columbia*. One of the primary purposes of Hawthorn's Report was to "obtain data and specific recommendations which could be considered in relation to future policy."⁴ To meet the criteria, the authors condensed a dizzying amount of information into a thorough report on socio-economic conditions on Aboriginal reserves and derived insightful recommendations from their analysis of the collected information. Lacking from the report, however, are the individual voices of people who opened their homes to Hawthorn's researchers and shared their personal experiences. Their goals and wishes, though not entirely absent from Hawthorn's report, are overpowered by the authors' principal objective – to report on existing conditions. My purpose in the preceding chapters has been to resituate individual people in a more central position and draw attention to their often-neglected aims.

Bringing Hawthorn's Report and Merton's analysis together served a dual purpose by shedding new light on both. Merton's theory of anomie, which centered on social ills

⁴ Harry Hawthorn, Cyril Belshaw and Stuart Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), vi.

resulting from an over-emphasis of socially prescribed goals over legitimate means, has commonly been employed to understand crime and other expressions of deviant behaviour. However, the fundamental questions put forth in Merton's theory are more broadly applicable and can serve as valuable analytical tools outside the study of social or individual disintegration. When Aboriginal people's socio-economic goals and means are examined, some common, and even academically accepted, misguided ideas begin to crumble. Aboriginal people in the 1950s did not flit from job to job because of a biological or cultural preference for seasonal employment. Many people expressed a desire for steady, reliable work and pay but changes in primary industries, geographical isolation and lack of training – in other words, limited means – were key culprits in preventing steady employment. Aboriginal children often had poor educational records, not because their parents did not see value in schooling, but because family obligations and inadequate resources interfered with educational attainment. Abysmal housing conditions, often assumed to result from residents' apathy, were actually signs of government interference and inconsistency.

My application of Durkheim's theory to Hawthorn's fieldnotes is similarly multifaceted. First, it moves away from the more common but flawed uses of Durkheim's ideas and instead suggests an alternate method and second, it complements the analysis based on Merton's theory by drawing attention to the government's role in preventing the successful pursuit of goals. Scholars have tended to pit Aboriginal people against modern society based on a faulty understanding of the evolution of societies posited by Durkheim. D.J. Spencer outlined the common argument that "change from a long-established pattern of life to that of a more powerful dominant culture creates personal conflict and social stresses, from which relief is unsatisfactorily sought by a variety of strategies such as

substance use and antisocial behaviours.” Contributing to the problem was the rapid rate of change, which resulted in greater social disruption.⁵ It is important to remember that the transition from traditional to modern cultural forms does not *inevitably* result in an anomic state because any fissures in solidarity are offset by an increase in interdependence and the development of the state. Moreover, attributing social ills found in Aboriginal communities to the rapid rate of change comes into question when one considers that Aboriginal people in North America were in contact with Europeans for at least two hundred years before alcoholism, substance abuse and suicide became common tragedies on reserves. Thus it appears that Durkheim’s theory of changing social structures has morphed into a buttress for the persistent belief that Aboriginal people were not capable of adapting to modern Euro-American societies. While the shift from mechanical to organic societies has been oversimplified to allow for this interpretation, the causes that Durkheim believed would actually result in such dysfunction have been overlooked, namely inconsistency, over-regulation and constraint exercised by the state. As such, the government’s role in creating marginalized, dysfunctional communities has been downplayed in favour of an argument that places blame on apparently inevitable and irreversible social/political trends.

In fact, the obstacles that people so often faced on reserves were not brought about by the rapid march of progress toward “modern” society or their inability to keep up. If anything, Aboriginal people have demonstrated a remarkable adaptability to changing circumstances and a desire to engage with modernity. Rather, many of the challenges they faced were rooted in their inability to control effectively key aspects of their lives because of the domineering and idiosyncratic nature of the Department of Indian Affairs. The

⁵ D.J. Spencer, “Anomie and Demoralization in Transitional Cultures: The Australian Aboriginal Model,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 37, no. 1 (2000): 8.

discussion in the last chapter revolved around the three factors cited by Durkheim as leading to an anomic state – over-extension of regulation, constraint and inconsistency – and found that each was present on Aboriginal reserves in the 1950s. The DIA controlled community life to the extent that it often prevented the very “development” that it was trying to achieve. There was little regard for the thoughts and opinions people expressed about their own needs and reserve residents were given few opportunities to speak on their own behalf or to take their rightful place in society. If Indian Agents did a poor job of absorbing the information Aboriginal people offered, they matched it by doing an equally abysmal job of sharing and disseminating information. The result was that policies, regardless of how methodical they may have seemed in Ottawa, came across more as madness to the people trying to abide by them.

The call for greater Aboriginal independence and self-government has a familiar, even hoarse sound, but Durkheim’s theoretical analysis combined with Hawthorn’s specific recommendations isolate the specific, concrete issues resulting from an over-bearing government. When combined with Merton’s goals/means analysis a new perspective emerges that sidesteps the all too common tendency to contextualize Aboriginal history by drawing comparisons with non-Native communities. Like Velutha and Ammu, we are given a “brief moment” to see things we “hadn’t seen before. Things that had been out of bounds so far, obscured by history’s blinkers.”⁶

⁶ Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New York: Random House, 1997), 168.

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